

Current Topics

THAT WAR MAY SOMETIMES BE A MEANS of good is illustrated by recent advices as to the internal progress and prosperity of Spain and her people since the termination of the war with the United States. Dr. Florestans Aguilar of Madrid, who is on a visit to this country for the purpose of arousing interest in the international medical congress to be held at Madrid, April 23 to 30, 1903, gives in the Chicago Chronicle an interesting account of the feeling in Spain. After denying the stories circulated as to the young king's escapades and the claim that he is unfit for his high office and its duties, the doctor said: "The government is in sound condition and has gained materially by the war with this country. Getting rid of the Philippines, receiving \$20,000,000 in cash, which she needed, and the influx of Cuban capitalists to the home country has proved of great benefit to us and we are having a period of great financial prosperity. We should never have entered upon any war with the United States if we had known what we were tackling, but it is just as well that we did. We have learned something about this country, where before we were in ignorance."

THE FIRST EXPLORER OF THE CELEBRATED Colorado Canyon, Major J. W. Powell, died recently at Haven, Me. Major Powell was also director of the bureau of ethnology in the Smithsonian institution at Washington, and has been placed by scientists in the foremost rank of the geologists and anthropologists of the world. He has been identified with the scientific work of the government since the early '60's. According to the Chicago Tribune, Major Powell's most notable scientific work, from the viewpoint of scientists, was his exploration of the Grand canon of the Colorado in the '60's. His fellow workers say he was not only the first man who ever went through the Colorado canyon, but the only one who ever has traveled its entire length from Green river station to the mouth of the canon. This exploit scientists say was one of the most notable geographical, geological, and ethnological explorations and surveys in the history of North America.

ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH-MAKING TOURS are dealt with in an interesting manner in the Louisville Courier-Journal. It is recalled that "two years ago when the nominee of the democratic party for president was touring the country in the interest of his candidacy for election, and the nominee of the republican party was resting quietly at his home in Canton, O., the course of the latter came in for much praise as dignified and statesmanlike when contrasted with the methods of campaign adopted by Mr. Bryan, who was a private citizen occupying no official position. The republican press, however, seems to have forgotten the incident, and there is no objection to Mr. Roosevelt and his entire cabinet making any kind of a campaign they see fit, even though he happens to be president and there is not even at stake an election which involves a change of administration. It all depends upon whose ox is gored."

AN EXPERIMENT THAT WILL BE WATCHED with a great deal of interest is about to be tried in London. It is said that English housewives have become convinced that something else besides the incompetence of domestics is responsible for the servant-girl problem, and are therefore seriously considering the advisability of establishing training schools for the girls' mistresses. A committee of society women who have just completed a systematic investigation into the causes of domestic woes in a variety of London homes, have reached the "unpalatable conclusion" that these woes are chiefly due to the incapacity of masters and mistresses to manage domestic affairs. The result of these inquiries has been published in a report which deals candidly with the question, and in conclusion says: "The words 'patience,' 'forbearance' and 'consideration' need to be printed large, not only in the servants' halls of England, but in most of the drawing rooms. When they are taken to heart we shall hear less of the servant-girl problem." This suggestion could be studied with profit not only in other lands, but in this country of ours, where the "domestic" problem has long been discussed as one of the questions of the day.

A MANIFESTO IN THE SHAPE OF AN APPEAL to the civilized world has been issued by the Boer generals, Botha, De Wet, and Delarey, on the ground that as they have failed to induce Great Britain to grant further assistance, the people of Europe and America are to be appealed to. In this appeal it is pointed out that at least 30,000 houses on Boer farms and many villages were burned or destroyed by the British during the war. It is claimed that the small amount given by Great Britain, even if multiplied ten-fold, would not suffice to cover the war losses alone, and contributions to assist the destitute Boers are asked for. The signers of this manifesto repudiate all desire to inflame the minds of the people, and declare: "The sword is now sheathed, and all differences are silent in the presence of such great misery."

SOME SURPRISE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED because the statistics relating to the operations of railroads show that while in 1893 the passengers numbered 593,560,612, in 1900 the passengers numbered 576,865,230. This is a decrease of 16,695,382. Reduced to percentages there were 2.8 per cent less passengers carried in 1900 than in 1893. These statistics also show that in 1893 the freight carried amounted to 745,119,482 tons. In 1900 the freight carried amounted to 1,101,680,238 tons. This represents an increase of the freight carried amounting to 356,560,756 tons.

SOME INTERESTING DETAILS AS TO THE progress of the coal strike are given in Public Opinion, of October 2. It is said that "at the end of the twentieth week of the coal strike last Saturday the total cost to all concerned was estimated at \$123,220,000. These estimates are altogether misleading, as we have heretofore pointed out, but the situation is bad enough without regard to the exact amount of the loss involved. At one time last week six counties in Pennsylvania were depending on the militia to keep even a semblance of order. Conditions improved after a few days, though not soon enough to check the steady diminution of sympathy with the strikers which has been going on with a rapidity proportioned to the ever increased price of coal. The mines are now producing 200,000 tons of coal a week and the strikers have lost. It is a pity that they cannot be brought to a realization of this fact." "The steady diminution of sympathy with the strikers" referred to is perhaps not altogether general, nor is any one yet justified in asserting that the strikers have lost. The pity lies not so much in the fact that "they cannot be brought to a realization of their failure" as that the coal barons cannot be made to understand that the duties of the "trustees of God" do not lie in the direction of oppression and injustice to their fellowmen.

THE RECENT DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE between the United States and Roumania regarding the Jews, has brought to light several instances of the high esteem in which these people are held in other countries of the globe. Sir Marcus Samuel, a Jew, is to be inaugurated mayor of London in a few weeks. There are also several Jews who are members of the privy council of the sovereign, notable among them being Lord Rothschild. Some of the most capable of England's colonial administrators are orthodox Hebrews, the entire Gold Coast dependency, for instance, being subject to the rule of a singularly able governor named Major Matthew Nathan. Jews also figure largely in the English army. The Italian king also has just given an illustration of his appreciation of able service in the appointment of General Ottolenghi, a Hebrew, to the post of minister of war. In Austro-Hungary, there are no less than 2,000 Jewish officers in the army, several of whom are very prominent in army circles. In France, despite the anti-Semitic movement, there are at least 300 professed Jews holding commissions in the army, among them brigadier generals and even generals of division.

AN INTERESTING COMPARISON AS TO man's longevity in Bible days and our time is made by a learned Russian physician. His article is condensed by the Literary Digest in the following translation: "Eight of the forefathers lived nearly a thousand years each. Adam lived 930 years, Seth 912, and so on until Enoch, who lived only 365 years, and of whom the Bible intimates that he died prematurely. Of each of the others it is said, 'And he died,' implying a perfectly natural cause, while of Enoch it is said: 'And he was not, for God took him.' Lamech's days were 777 and Noah 950. When we reach Terah, the change is striking; for his days were only 205 years, and there is no intimation of any

special cause of death. Abraham, who 'died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years,' lived altogether 175 years."

SOME BIBLE CRITICS ASSERT THAT IN THE antedeluvian period our month was called a year, but this view is not taken by this author. His view is that just as the animals of those days were of stupendous and colossal proportions, so the organism of man were naturally stronger and their health infinitely better. The climatic conditions were also more favorable to the longevity of the race, and the mode of living differed radically from what it is in our time. The use of fermented liquids was totally unknown and the vice of alcoholism with all its evils was absent. To all this must be added the entire freedom from the diseases due to congestion and the sundry other evils of dense population. Taking into consideration all these causes, it is not difficult to understand the claim set forth that "in short, in 3,000 years the average of human life fell from upwards of 900 to 260 years, and as a result of natural causes."

AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF AN ODD elevator test is given in the Kansas City Journal of October 5. The Journal says: "The elevator tower in the Philadelphia city hall is to be tested to determine its safety, and to arrive at this important conclusion live rats, a keg of nails, a glass of water and fresh eggs will be used. In making the test the keg and glass of water will be placed in the elevator car and on the keg of nails, while the rats in a trap will be set beside the keg. When these preliminaries have been arranged the car will be released from the top of the tower and allowed to descend to the air cushion at the bottom, traveling the 372 feet and 9 inches at the rate of 256 feet a second. If the water is not spilled, if the eggs are not cracked and the rats are not dead after the drop the test will be considered satisfactory."

A PROBLEM FOR ORNITHOLOGISTS TO solve is provided by A. M. Mumford in the Chicago Tribune of October 5. He makes the assertion that there has been a marked tendency in the last two or three years on the part of several of the feathered species to change their travel time from darkness to daylight when bound on their southern autumn journey. This change has been especially noticeable along the east coast of Lake Michigan, which has been a guiding line for the birds in spring and fall for years unnumbered. Some Chicago observers have called the matter to the attention of the biological survey of the agricultural department at Washington and it is probable that a close investigation will be made by the ornithologists attached to the survey. The night-hawks, for instance, that are almost strictly nocturnal in their habits, have been noticed lately to pursue their journey south in the daytime. This change in their migration habits is puzzling students of ornithology and it is said that the number of birds that are killed by contact with the heavy glass of the light houses on the coasts is not as great as formerly. This is taken as an indication that the birds are either diminishing in number or that to some extent at least they are changing their migration habits, and the question is "Why?"

KENTUCKY CLAIMS TO POSSESS THE OLDEST living man in the United States in the person of "Uncle" Elijah Bledsoe, a negro, who says he is 130 years of age. He remembers the war of 1812 very distinctly and has in his possession a piece of money which was given him as a "tip" by Marquis de Lafayette for services rendered the distinguished Frenchman. The old negro claims that he knew Aaron Burr, but does not admire him very much, perhaps because Burr endeavored to buy Bledsoe from his master. Bledsoe made himself famous in 1830 by one of the most noted running contests in history, when he covered a distance of thirty-two miles in less than two hours, his opponent dropping dead on the road.

DURING THE WAR WITH SPAIN, MUCH discontent was expressed in this country over the censorship established by the military officials over dispatches from Cuba and the Philippines; and the fact of this inconvenience leads one to wonder how the people of the United States would regard a censorship such as the press of Russia must submit to. The New York World has obtained a list from a German newspaper of things which the Russian newspapers are not allowed to print, and here are some of them: No. 7,130—The statement concerning Count Leo Tolstol's journey to the Crimea, contained in the Petersburg Nachrichten, is not to be reproduced. Per Telephone—You are recommended to