

Current Topics

THERE ARE MANY MEN IN THIS COUNTRY enjoying high reputation who object to municipal ownership. It is true that the municipal ownership idea has grown in the United States at a rapid rate during recent years and yet the position of antagonism on the part of influential men in various communities throughout the country has prevented the municipal ownership plan being very generally established in the United States. A large number of towns in England have adopted municipal ownership and the London Times recently began a vigorous campaign against the plan. The London correspondent for the New York Evening Post says that the Times is being laughed at for its pains. According to this correspondent: "Returns published show how provincial towns are securing better services as regards gas, water and markets by municipal management, while they are also relieving their rates out of the profits. Darlington, after six years of municipal enterprise, has made a net profit of \$350,000, relieving the rates of each family in the town to an average amount of \$7.50. Birmingham's profits in five years are \$618,640; Bolton's \$1,002,325, Leeds \$872,015, Nottingham's \$630,000, Manchester's \$2,210,000, while the water rate also has been reduced from 5d to 1d in the pound. The Times is beating the air when it seeks to induce the ratepayers who thus benefit from their own municipal enterprises, to hand themselves over to the kindly mercies of American trusts, lest the sacred cause of industrial freedom be injured."

IN A RECENT INTERVIEW MR. BRISTOW, fourth assistant postmaster general, declared that from now, henceforth and forever Kansas will be reliably republican. But the Kansas City Journal, a republican paper, provides Mr. Bristow with a warning. The Journal points out that in 1888 the republican candidate for governor received a plurality of more than 73,000 and a clear majority of 37,000. In the election of 1890 the republican candidate for governor had a plurality of 8,000 and the opposition combine had a majority of 63,000 over the republican party. Subsequently this plurality was wiped out and Kansas was lost to the republican party. The Journal says that this change was not entirely due to the farmers' alliance. The Journal says it was due to a general feeling of dissatisfaction with republican administration and it explains: "The politicians at the head of the republican party in Kansas had weakened their organization by paying more attention to spoils than to principles, and when a new party sprang up it carried away some 60,000 republican voters with very little trouble. Mr. Bristow would be among the first to admit that this is a true picture of Kansas conditions in 1888-90. Indeed, he belonged to the anti-spoils wing of the republican party and frequently protested against the methods of the professional politicians who were in charge of things. And we may be assured that on second thought he would qualify his recent utterance with respect to republican rule in perpetuity—would admit that no party can long sustain itself in Kansas unless it practices decent politics, obeys the will of the people and keeps its spoilsmen down."

THE ATTENTION OF THE ATTACHES OF A hospital in Philadelphia was recently attracted to a peculiar association of names. Miss Death was brought to the hospital to be operated upon for appendicitis. The patient was the daughter of an undertaker. A Philadelphia paper says: "The surgeon's name who was chosen to perform the operation was Dye—Dr. Frank Hackett Dye. When the operation was over Miss Death was placed in charge of two nurses. Miss Payne is the day nurse; Miss Grone is the night nurse. The patient is recovering rapidly, and in a week or so Miss Death will bid good-bye to Dr. Dye, Miss Payne and Miss Grone."

IN A MAGAZINE ARTICLE DESCRIBING Gladstone's home life, the writer says that soon after his marriage the Grand Old Man suggested to Mrs. Gladstone that she was either to know nothing and thus be free of all responsibility or to know everything and be bound to secrecy. Fifty years later Gladstone said, "My wife has known every political secret I ever had," and the writer declares that "this remark points to the

choice Mrs. Gladstone made and also illustrates her discretion."

THE PASTOR OF THE METHODIST CHURCH at Trenton, Mo., spent his last vacation in a way that was at once profitable and instructive to his congregation. The name of this clergyman is Rev. J. O. Taylor. The roof of the church required shingling and assisted by one of his flock, Mr. Taylor, who, by the way, weighs 225 pounds put a new roof on the church building.

MISS WADSWORTH OF BOSTON RECENTLY lectured in Kansas City. Miss Wadsworth's subject was "Shakespeare and the Bible." The lecturer announced her desire to establish two points, one being that Shakespeare was familiar with the Bible and the other that he firmly believed in the doctrines that it teaches. The Kansas City Journal report of Miss Wadsworth's address says: "To sustain the first point, she read first from the Bible and then from Shakespeare passages that showed marked similarity in both thought and expression. In reference to this part of her lecture Miss Wadsworth said the ministers before whom she had read the lecture had frequently stopped to ask which passages were those from the Bible and which were Shakespeare's. To sustain the second point she read portions of Shakespeare's will, which, she said, reveal true belief in the orthodox Christian religion. In her introductory remarks Miss Wadsworth said that Hall Caine takes his situations from the Bible. Milton and Bacon make frequent allusions to Scripture and that Goethe drew his inspiration from the Good Book. She cited the case of Fanny Kemble who said that the profession of acting had more pitfalls for human beings in it than any other but that she, in times of temptation, had strengthened her soul with texts she had learned in childhood. And in her old age the actress was accustomed to quell her rebellious servants by quoting from Shakespeare and the Bible. Miss Wadsworth believes that Shakespeare learned the Bible thoroughly in his youth and that he depended largely upon it for inspiration for material to draw the great lessons of life and for consolation in the sorrows that came to him."

THE ORGANIZATION OF A COMPANY TO control the peppermint and essential oil crop of the world is reported from Kalamazoo, Mich. The name of this concern is the A. M. Todd company. This company is said to have secured control of 95 per cent of this crop. A dispatch to the New York American says: "The price of peppermint oil, which a month ago was \$2.50 a pound, is now \$5. As the total crop this year is about 190,000 pounds, the total value will be \$900,000, and the advance amounts to nearly half a million. New York speculators have kept down the prices and the growing of the essential oil plant has been unprofitable. Todd says that under the new arrangement the growers will reap profits. The crop of the present season is only two-thirds as large as usual. The heavy rainfall has produced the smallest crop in ten years."

NEEDLES AND PINS ARE VERY INSIGNIFICANT articles so far as appearance is concerned and yet what would the world do without needles and pins? It is strange that the people know but little of the manufacture of many of the things so necessary to their convenience. A writer in the Chicago Chronicle throws some light on this particular subject. According to this writer, the mills of the United States practically supply the whole world with pins. In 1900 the 75,000,000 people in the United States used 66,000,000 gross of common pins which is equal to 9,500,000,000 pins, or an average of about 126 pins for every man, woman and child in the country. During 1900 the total number of pins manufactured in the United States amounted to 68,889,260 gross. There are in this country 43 pin factories with 2,353 employes. The business has grown rapidly during the last twenty years, for, although there were forty factories in 1880, they produced only half so much, employed only about half the capital and only 1,077 hands. There has been a considerable increase in the number of women and children employed in pin factories of late years, which is an indication that the machinery is being improved and simplified and that its operation does not require so high an order of mechanical skill.

AMONG THE BY-PRODUCTS OF PINMAKING are hooks and eyes, and according to this same writer these are produced at most of the factories from material that cannot be used for pins. The output of hooks and eyes in 1900 amounted to 1,131,824 gross. This same writer describes the

process of manufacture in this interesting way: Pins and hooks and eyes are turned out by automatic machines, in such quantities today that the cost of manufacture is practically limited to the value of the brass wire from which they are made. A single machine does the whole business. Coils of wire, hung upon reels, are passed into machines which cut them into proper lengths and drop off into a receptacle and arrange themselves in the line of a slot formed by two bars. When they reach the lower end of the bars they are seized and pressed between two dies, which form the heads, and pass along into the grip of another steel instrument which points them by pressure. They are then dropped into a solution of sour beer, whirling as they go, to be cleaned, and then into a hot solution of tin, which is also kept revolving. They here receive their bright coat of metal and are pushed along, killing time until they have had an opportunity to harden, when they are dropped into a revolving barrel of sawdust, which cools and polishes them at the same time. Because of the oscillation of the bars they work gradually down to the bottom of the barrel, which is a metallic plate cut into slits just big enough for the body of the pins, but not big enough for the head to pass through. Thus they are straightened out into rows again, and, like well-drilled soldiers, pass along toward the edge of the bottom, and slide down an inclined plane, still hanging by their heads, until they reach strips of paper, to which they are introduced by a curious jerk of the machine. The first they know they are all placed in rows, wrapped up and on their way to the big department stores, where they are sold at from 5 cents to 10 cents a gross. A machine is expected to throw out several thousand gross an hour. Needles are made by a similar machine. In 1900 there were made 1,397,533 gross of machine needles, 212,689 gross for shoemaking, 324,476 gross for ordinary household sewing machines, 307,426 gross for knitting machines and the rest for other kinds of sewing and knitting machinery, generally for factory use. We imported \$418,004 worth of ordinary needles, most of them from England. Hairpins and safety pins and other kinds of pins are manufactured in a similar manner. We made 1,189,104 gross of hairpins in 1890. Both needles and hairpins are manufactured to a greater extent in Europe than plain pins. Safety pins, however, are decidedly American and of these we make on an average 1,000,000 gross a year.

AN INTERESTING FEATURE PROVIDED BY the Chicago Inter-Ocean is the publication in the form of a cable dispatch from London of interesting remarks made the preceding week by public men. In a recent issue the London correspondent of the Inter-Ocean presents "some of the bright remarks made by public men during the week," as follows: "The greatness of a nation is made by its greatest men."—Colonial Secretary Chamberlain. "Unless a nation is morally healthy as well as physically, there is but little hope for its future."—Sir William Blake Richmond, the painter. "Uneducated nations like uneducated individuals must be content to do the roughest work and take the lower places in the world."—Lord Avebury, president Central Association of Bankers. "Education has been from the beginning to the people of the United States their greatest interest and most productive and happy investment."—Joseph Choate, American ambassador to England. "Landlordism in Ireland must go."—Thomas Wallace Russel, unionist M. P. for Tyrone. "Drunkenness should be treated primarily and throughly as a sin."—Sir Thomas Barlow, King Edward's physician. "I think precedent has been the curse of this country."—Lord Rosebery.

"WHY THE DEAD SEA IS DEAD," IS THE problem which a writer in the Chicago Record-Herald undertakes to solve. Scientific observations, according to this writer, justifies the estimate that the daily average of 6,500,000 tons of water is received in the Dead sea from the Jordan and other sources during the year. During the rainy season the amount is very much greater; during the dry season, it is, of course, very much less, but this average will be maintained year after year. There is no outlet and the level is kept down by evaporation only, which is very rapid because of the intense heat, the dry atmosphere and the dry winds are constantly blowing down the gorges between the mountains. This evaporation causes a haze of mist to hang over the lake at all times, heavy clouds form and thunderstorms sometimes rage with great violence in the pocket between the cliffs, even in the dry season. A flood of rain often falls upon the surface of the sea when the sun is shining and the atmosphere is as dry as a bone half a mile from the shore. The moun-