

Current Topics

M. ZUOMTO, THE JAPANESE EDITOR OF the only newspaper in Japan printed in English, and known as the Japanese Times, recently delivered a lecture in London. A writer for the Westminster Gazette, describing this lecture, says that there is not a town of ten thousand people in Japan which does not possess at least one newspaper, that two or three cheap popular papers in the capital have circulations running from 100,000 to 150,000. Obtaining his information from M. Zuomto's address, the Gazette writer explains: "Apart from liability under the libel law, the fullest freedom is permitted, except when the country is on the verge or at war, when the reasonable intimation is conveyed that news as to the movements of ships and troops must not be published. Fiction fills the most important place in editorial policy; but a fair proportion of space is given up to telegraphic news, including cables from eastern ports and Europe and America. The most successful and prosperous journals are so-called 'yellow journals,' and there was much hypocritical denunciation concerning these, people who denounced them buying three copies to one of the grave and accurate journals which they professed to support. But when these 'yellow journals' ventured to meddle in affairs of state they experienced severe rebuffs. Seven weeks previous to the official announcement of the Anglo-Japanese alliance one of these journals published in commanding type a report that it had been arranged, but 'thanks to its well-established reputation,' 'what was really a big 'scoop' attracted no attention.'"

THE FIGHT FOR THE SPEAKERSHIP OF THE republican house is practically at an end although the friends of Mr. Dalzell of Pennsylvania yet show signs of life. Recently Representative Babcock, who is the chairman of the republican congressional committee, withdrew and the Wisconsin delegation, of which he is a member, pledged its support to Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois. It is announced that Mr. Cannon has the support of Mark Hanna. Mr. Littlefield of Maine has practically withdrawn from the contest. Mr. Sherman of New York announced that he is not a candidate. Mr. Sereno Payne of New York, while being undoubtedly in a receptive mood, disclaims any intention to go in search of the prize. At the present writing it cannot be doubted that Mr. Cannon has decidedly the best of the race and it will not be in the least surprising should the Illinois statesman become the nominee of the republican caucus by acclamation.

PROF. BURT G. WILDER OF THE NEUROLOGY department of Cornell university has recently become conspicuous because of a demand he has made for the fulfillment of a promise alleged to have been given by the late Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It is reported that Professor Wilder claims that several years ago Mrs. Stanton became interested in the collection of the brains of eminent men and women made by Cornell university and that she promised Professor Wilder that she would include in her will a clause authorizing that her brains should be added to the Cornell collection. Mrs. Stanton's relatives object to the fulfillment of the alleged promise, but Professor Wilder insists upon compliance with the pledge. The collection of the brains of conspicuous people is said to be Professor Wilder's hobby and the news dispatches report that this gentleman is greatly disappointed because of the refusal of Mrs. Stanton's relatives to comply with Mrs. Stanton's pledge.

A HOSPITAL FOR THE EXCLUSIVE TREATMENT of infants has been established in New York city. The promoters of this institution were influenced by the claim that out of 10,000 hospital beds in Gotham, in 1887, only 27 were devoted to children under one year of age. At that time it was reported that 26 per cent of the total death rate in New York city occurred among children under twelve months and 34 per cent occurred among children under two years of age. Because of these facts the "babies' hospital" was established and its promoters appear to be highly gratified because of the results so far attained.

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO HEAR REFERENCES to the "Wild Man of Borneo," and it was recently reported that two men of science were ex-

ploring the island of Celebes in order to prove the existence of such a being. The story of the experience of these scientists is told in the Chicago Tribune of recent date in this manner: "When the two scientists landed at Macassar they heard stories of the existence of the wild men, and these they thought to be merely myths. It was said that a type of primitive man was extant and to be found in the unexplored wilds. Their informants said the wild men were so shy and untamable that it was almost impossible to get near to them, even to catch a glimpse of them. The stories were not generally believed in Macassar, and the explorers thought at first that escaped criminals had taken to the mountains and had frightened the natives into believing them to be wild. Upon further inquiries they learned that the wild men, or 'wood men,' were confined to a certain district and were subject to a rajah. They proceeded to this district bearing gifts to the potentate. Under the influence of a wise distribution of presents the explorers so worked on the rajah that he agreed to show them certain types of the wood men who were held in captivity. He had a man, two women, and a child brought before the scientists, who decided at a glance that they belonged to a primitive race of man. These specimens, however, were half tamed and had been in captivity so long that they had lost many of the characteristics of their race. The rajah added that the real wild men lived in the mountains. Protected by nature to a large extent, they live in the fashion of men of the stone age, without many of the accomplishments of gentlemen of that period. They defend themselves with stones, not even having learned the art of making the stone hatchet, which indicates that they are considerably behind the state of civilization in which our ancestors of the stone age lived. They are cave dwellers, not having learned to build shelters and probably not caring to. They are monogamous. Culture is at such a low ebb with them that they cannot even count, and they do not know how to tell a lie. They are in such a primitive state that they have to tell the truth. Possibly their vocabulary is not sufficiently developed. These stories of the rajah have interested the scientists, and they are now in the mountains trying to find the real 'wild man of Borneo.'"

THE ONLY WOMAN VETERINARY SURGEON in the world is found in the person of Mrs. Mignonne Nicholson, a native of New York. It is said that Mrs. Nicholson has always displayed a love for animals, and has spent much of her time in the study of her four-footed friends. Having leisure time on her hands she began to amuse herself in treating the sick pets of her neighbors, and in this way she began the study of the science that has now become her lifework. She is, at present, a student of the Chicago Veterinary college from which place she will graduate in March. According to the Chicago Tribune Mrs. Nicholson explains the feeling she has for her animal subjects in this interesting way: "I do not feel as free with horses as with cats and dogs. Dogs and cats never bite or scratch me, and I can do anything with them. I have yet to see the dog, for instance, however large, sick, or powerful, that I could not soothe and calm into quietude and quiescence by taking him off by himself."

HUMANITY IS CURSED WITH MANY ILLS and diseases, but without doubt the most loathsome and dreaded of all is the disease called leprosy. According to a Paris publication Dr. Filaretopoulo, professor in the faculty of medicine at Athens, has for the past six months been studying this disease in its hotbed, which is the island of Crete. The Paris publication says that it is too generally believed that the leper has disappeared, if not from the world, at least from our own land; but it is not necessary to go very far to find him, and this suffices to justify all the measures which are taken against him. These measures are of general interest, more general than one thinks, for it is nearly certain that leprosy is but an aggravated form of tuberculosis, and that that which destroys the one will surely lessen the other. Dr. Filaretopoulo has come with his figures, and he tells us that at present there are 300,000 lepers in the world. This figure is very much lower than the actual number, for it represents only the certain cases, and the statistics for the orient, where the disease has full sway, are of doubtful accuracy.

IT IS FURTHER STATED BY THIS AUTHOR-ity that "leprosy is hereditary and probably contagious, and however great the restrictions the lepers contaminate others. It is this contagion which it is first necessary to do away with. Dr.

Filaretopoulo states that the danger proceeds from want of care in the pest houses wherein the lepers are kept; they go out when they so desire, beg in the villages, tend sheep, and sometimes marry healthy persons. Although Dr. Filaretopoulo has noticed some cases in which the patients improve, there does not seem at the present time any positive cure. At the same time it is necessary to state, with scientific brutality, that this particular point has only a relative importance, for when the house burns it is better to protect the movables close by than to attempt to save some broken-legged chairs. The leper is to be pitied, he is to be cared for, if he can be helped one should not hesitate to do so, but every effort should be directed to establishing around those infected a rigorous defensive cordon; for if in the present state of science it is not possible to uproot the evil, we must prevent its germ from spreading."

A VERY DEPRESSING ITEM OF NEWS COMES from London in the form of a cablegram to the Chicago Chronicle. It is said that bacon at breakfast is as elemental an institution in England as the monarchy. Britishers are now compelled to forego their favorite food owing to the operations of the American trust, which is steadily sending the price above what the average man can afford to pay. Alphonse Daudet attributed the stolidity of the British character to the dyspeptic effects of the perennial bacon and eggs for breakfast. Nevertheless the race is wedded to the dish and grumble loudly because it is placed beyond reach. Bacon is 25 per cent dearer than it was a year ago and the price is rising every month. This is really the form in which American competition is most bitterly resented, as it strikes home in every household and provokes animosity everywhere.

THE ONLY NEWSPAPER PRINTED BELOW the level of the sea is said to be the Indo-Submarine, which is a little four-page weekly. The New York World is authority for the story of this interesting newspaper which is situated in the midst of the most formidable desert in California, namely, the Colorado desert, which is in the same county as the city of San Diego. Some time ago the editor of this paper removed his plant from Indio to Coachella, and made the following explanation to his readers: "Inducements of a flattering character having been offered the publisher, in the way of a bonus, we have removed our printing office from Indio to Coachella, a distance of three and one-half miles. We have dropped from twenty-two feet below sea-level to seventy-six feet below sea-level. We hit Coachella with a dull yet raucous thud. The low rumbling noise you heard last Tuesday was caused by our printing office making the drop. It may be truly said that the Submarine is the lowest down, or the lowdownest, or the most low down newspaper on earth. As nearly as we can compute the distance, hades is about 212 feet just below our new office. The paper will continue to advocate the interests of all the country below sea-level, and we want you to fire in all the news you know."

THE HONOR OF CONSTRUCTING THE RAIL-road farthest north belongs to a Swedish company, according to a writer in the Chicago Chronicle. It is said that at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, in northern Sweden, is the port of Lulea, a town of almost 5,000 inhabitants, distinguished as the southern terminus of a railroad which runs to a point fifty-two miles inside of the arctic circle. Nome is almost 200 miles south of this; White Horse over 450 miles. This Swedish railroad is a well-kept, well-built line of the standard Swedish gauge, which is the same as our own, and it carries iron ore to the gulf from the mines at Malmerget in Swedish Lapland. From Lulea to Malmerget the distance by rail is about 160 miles through a country very sparsely inhabited, with almost continuous woods of light green, stunted evergreen trees, with their limbs slanting down instead of upward because of the long burden of snow they bear. Malmerget is far enough north so that it has the midnight sun in June, and even in August the sun just barely dips under the hills at 11 p. m., and then the crimson sunset travels through a short ellipse and becomes sunrise in the east at 2 in the morning, without losing a trace of its beauty in between. There are two through trains daily in each direction between Lulea and the northern termini at Gellivare and Malmerget and the running time is not far from seven hours, including stops. The trains are made up of second and third class cars, the second class being quite clean and comfortable and very exclusive, since travel as luxurious as this is seldom indulged in in Swedish Lapland. Besides the through traffic,