

CURRENT TOPICS

THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT PROVIDES A pension fund of \$60,000,000 which is used for the relief of railroad men who suffer from accidents. A writer in the New York Tribune says that the care of railroad men is one of the few philanthropies to the credit of the government of the bear and that the elaborate scale on which it was worked out shows what the Russians can do if they will. The Russian railroad hospital is a combination hospital for the sick and injured and a home for invalids and is usually surrounded with a large tract of land with ample buildings for the comfort of not only the invalids, but for their families, the grounds being divided into tracts which the families can work for their own profit. Great progress has been made recently in the establishment of railroad hospitals in the United States. The largest railway hospital in the world is said to be located in St. Louis where 18,000 patients were treated last year.

A SURVEY OF THE MASON AND DIXON line is now being made under the authority of the United States coast and geodetic survey. A writer in the St. Louis Republic says that the popular impression that the Mason and Dixon line formed the dividing line between the slave and anti-slave states is erroneous. During the war this line was talked of in a vague way and became confused with the Missouri compromise and many other current terms of expression of the time. This writer says that the Mason and Dixon line is the boundary between Maryland on one side and Pennsylvania and Delaware on the other side. It formed the northern and eastern boundary of Maryland, so far as limited by contiguous states. At the time of its survey Delaware was part of Pennsylvania, and was known as the "Three Lower Counties on the River Delaware." The term is, however, often extended to cover the whole southern boundary of Pennsylvania, and not without good reason, as Mason and Dixon had received instructions to complete the whole of that line, and had actually progressed some thirty miles to the westward of the western limit of Maryland, then unmarked and unknown, when their operations were stopped by the Indians, who were then all-powerful west of the Alleghenies. This was in 1768, and was the final act of a long-maintained and rancorous dispute between the lords proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, which had its birth in the grant by King Charles I. of England, to Caecilius Calvert, Baron Baltimore, of the province of Maryland, carved from the parent province of Virginia, and extending on the north to the fortieth parallel of latitude. This included the whole of Delaware and about fifteen miles width along the southern border of Pennsylvania.

WHEN MANY YEARS LATER WILLIAM Penn obtained from King Charles II. the grant of the province of Pennsylvania and established his town of Philadelphia, according to this same authority, he found to his dismay that the fortieth parallel would pass through that town, and he, therefore, refused to accept that charter limit as his boundary. Penn seems to have been a shrewd and unscrupulous politician, and, having a strong influence at the court, both of Charles II. and of James II., he managed, through a series of intrigues and litigations far too long to even mention here, to force a situation which resulted in Maryland losing Delaware and having to accept as the southern boundary of Pennsylvania a parallel of latitude situated fifteen miles south of the most southern part of the city of Philadelphia.

THAT IT WAS ONLY AFTER NEARLY A century of controversy, of litigation, almost a civil war that Penn's descendants finally acquired the fruition of his schemes is pointed out by this same authority and it is further explained that after several years' abortive attempts by local surveyors to carry out the mandates of the English courts of law, the proprietors employed two noted English mathematicians—Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon—to come to this country and mark out the boundary on the ground. They brought the best instruments of the day, and, entirely discarding the compass needle, so generally and unfortunately employed in similar work, they made a survey that is really

monumental in its way, and undoubtedly the best of all the provincial boundary surveys. Arriving at Philadelphia in the fall of 1763, they began active operations the following spring and continued the work until the fall of 1768, when they were discharged. The object of the present survey is to restore the old monuments, many of which have been destroyed or removed and to erect additional monuments for the better definition of the line. Owing to the fact of Maryland being a slave state, while Pennsylvania was a free state, this line was frequently mentioned in the discussion over that burning question and many confound it with the "Missouri compromise line." It was also generally forgotten that the boundary between Maryland and Delaware was a part of the Mason and Dixon line. These were both slave states and there was therefore no distinction to be drawn.

A NEW JERSEY PENNY BEARING THE date of 1787 was unearthed by the sexton of the parish cemetery at Mamituck, Long Island. The sexton discovered the coin while he was engaged in opening a grave. The Mamituck correspondent of the Brooklyn Eagle says: "On the penny's face is the United States shield and the inscription 'E Pluribus Unum,' and on the reverse the date, 1787; a horse's head and a plow (coat-of-arms of New Jersey), and the inscription, 'Nova Caesarea' (Latin for New Jersey). The sexton was cleaning up the earth removed from the grave of Elias Smith, when the penny was found. The land where the cemetery is located was once farming land, bought of the late Joseph Wickham by the late John Cox, and presented to the parish. One portion of the cemetery dates back in the 1600 period, but the spot where the penny was found was acquired since that time."

A JURY IN THE FEDERAL COURT IN Hannibal, Mo., was recently persuaded to render a verdict against a railroad company in the sum of \$14,198.28. The attorney for the plaintiff adopted a unique method of bringing about this result. Mrs. Martha B. Phipps of Macon had brought suit against the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad for \$15,000. Mrs. Phipps was represented by Attorney Norton. The Hannibal correspondent of the Kansas City Journal tells the interesting story in this way: "Mrs. Phipps claimed that a spark from one of its engines caused the burning of her deceased husband's business property at Ethel. The testimony showed that the Santa Fe train stopped at Ethel four minutes the night of the fire, but also that the fire was well under way before the train pulled out, and the road's attorneys argued that it was ridiculous to maintain that a fire could be started by a spark and get well under way in such a short time. Mr. Norton took out his watch and handed it to Jurymen L. S. Harlan, a banker of Clifton Hill, Randolph county, and requested him to signal when four minutes had passed. The jurymen leaned over and looked down at the watch. Then they got tired and settled back in their seats. Mr. Harlan lowered his hand and rested it on his knee. The attorney shifted his feet a few times and sat down in a chair. Judge Adams looked at the clock and then out of the window. A deputy marshal put his head in at the door to see what was the matter, and awaited the result of the curious scene. Nearly every man in the room that had a watch was studying its face. The speaker was sacrificing four minutes of his allotted time, but he felt that it was well invested. At last Juror Harlan announced the four minutes had expired, and handed the watch back to Mr. Norton; only four minutes, and yet to every man in the room it had seemed, under the suppressed tension, to have been twice as long. The jury brought in a verdict for the plaintiff for \$14,198.28—the exact sum her proof showed her loss to be."

THE ALGONQUIN INDIANS OCCUPIED A considerable section of this country years ago. A large number of them roamed over the territory from Labrador to the Rocky mountains and from Hudson Bay to Pamlico Sound. The larger number of them were driven into Canada. A writer in the New York Tribune says that he has discovered that the Algonquins left to the peo-

ple of the United States a large number of verbal heirlooms. He says that there are one hundred and thirty-one words of Algonquin derivation in the English language. Among these are the following: Chipmunk, hickory, hominy, menhaden, moccasin, moose, mugwump, musquash, pemmican, persimmon, pappoose, pone, porgy, 'possum, powwow, raccoon, samp, skunk, squash, squaw, succotash, Tammany, tautog, terrapin, toboggan, tomahawk, totem, wigwam, woodchuck.

A CLERGYMAN LIVING AT SYRACUSE, N. Y., has just now received considerable attention from the press. The name of this clergyman is Allan D. Draper. He was pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian church of Syracuse at a salary of \$3,000 per year. Recently Mr. Draper applied to the general Presbyterian session to release him from his pastorate and permit him to take up work in the Elmwood Presbyterian church at a salary of \$800 per year. The request was granted and Mr. Draper left a church having a membership of 700, a seating capacity of 900, a property valuation of \$100,000 and a salary of \$3,000 for a church having a membership of 80, a seating capacity of 200, a property valuation of \$10,000 and a salary of \$800. Mr. Draper explains that he made the exchange because of the good he believed he could accomplish and it will not be doubted that a man capable of such a sacrifice may be depended upon to accomplish good in any field.

THE ASHTABULA DISASTER OF 1876 WAS recalled by an incident that recently happened within three-quarters of a mile of the scene of that famous accident. An Ashtabula, O., dispatch by the Associated press under date of March 21 says that "the Twentieth Century Limited west-bound train came near meeting a terrible fate. Only the hand of Providence saved it. Inexplainably a derail signal showed a danger signal when the track was clear. This caused the engineer to stop his train and when he started it after ascertaining that the track was clear, the train was not yet going at much speed when it struck a defective switch and left the tracks. Had it not been for this incident the train would have rushed through this city at high speed. The Twentieth Century Limited does not stop at Ashtabula. It is the train which makes the run from New York to Chicago in twenty hours. The rear cars of five passenger coaches remained on the track and only the front wheels of one in front of it left the rails."

THE MAYOR OF BALTIMORE, WHO IS A candidate for re-election, undeterred by the experience of the governor of Kansas, has promised that if re-elected, he will marry. The mayor confesses that he has not yet selected the woman and his opponents are citing the horrible example set by the governor of Kansas as providing reason for the demand that the mayor give at least some signs of progress before the ballots shall be cast.

A MONUMENT TO A HORSE IS TO BE erected at Sullivan, Ill. The Bloomington correspondent of the Chicago Record-Herald says that the trustees of the proposed home for aged members of the Masonic order at Sullivan will erect this monument. The explanation for this strange decision is given as follows: "Some time ago Illinois Masons accepted the legacy of the farm of Robert Miller as a site for a home. The farm is of 260 acres, valued at fully \$25,000. While the trustees were inspecting the farm they discovered a mound surrounded by a neatly kept fence, and were informed it was the grave of a favorite gray mare, owned by Miller when he was a young man. In the spring of 1849 Mr. Miller made a journey to California on horseback; he returned, and then repeated the journey twice. He used the same animal for the three trips, aggregating fully 25,000 miles. Both owner and horse accomplished the long journeys unscathed and the animal lived many years afterward. When it died Mr. Miller buried it with considerable ceremony and erected the fence around the grave. When the Masonic board heard the story of Mr. Miller's regard for the mare they decided without a dissenting vote to do what they believed would have pleased Mr. Miller more