

CURRENT TOPICS

THE PLAN OF MAKING PAPER FROM cornstalks has been experimented upon at Kankakee, Ill., under the supervision of representatives of the national agriculture department. Referring to these experiments, a writer in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press says that American farmers and newspaper men are likely to become joint beneficiaries of a great scheme of co-operation in making most of the corn crops. This writer says that "it is found that high grade paper can be profitably manufactured in different varieties from various parts of the plant. One kind is made from the hard shell of the stalk, another from the pith, and a third from the husk. From the pith is turned out the finest grade of oil paper, almost equal to linen paper, so it is claimed by experts at the department. A machine has been invented and is now being manufactured which will take the cornstalk, with the ear still on it, husk the ear, separate the husk from the stalk, and then remove the shell from the pith. Sending this machine into the fields, the paper manufacturers will propose to farmers to buy their corn crops as they stand in the fields. If the farmers wish the corn after it has been husked, it will be passed back to them; otherwise it will be marketed by the owner of the machine, who will convert every remaining part of the plant into some form of manufacture."

A NOVEL DEFENSE IN A DAMAGE SUIT has been offered in a Missouri court by the attorneys for the Wabash railroad. The Kansas City Journal reports that J. M. Sauvinett brought suit against the Wabash company demanding \$100 because his horse was killed by falling through one of the trestles of the Wabash road. W. H. Sears of Macon, Mo., attorney for the railroad company, says: "The Wabash railroad is no more liable for the death of Mr. Sauvinett's horse than if it had wandered into the yards and butted its head off against a freight car. It (the horse) had evidently made up its mind to jump off a bridge somewhere, and just because it happened to succeed on one of ours is no reason why we should have to put up the price of it." The Journal says that the plaintiff has refused to accept this interesting version of the matter and insists that if the railroad company had had its trestles properly protected, the horse would never have been injured.

THE CHIEF OF THE INSULAR DIVISION of the war department recently exhibited to Washington correspondents the first of the new silver money to be used in the Philippines. This coin is called a "peso." The Washington correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean says that the new coin is simple and chaste in design. On its face is an emblematic female figure representing a Filipino working out the destinies of her home on an anvil. Behind her is the smoking cone of a volcano, and around the picture are the words, "One Peso," "Filipinas." On the reverse of the coin is a slightly modified representation of the United States coat of arms, with the words "United States of America."

A REPORT RECENTLY ISSUED BY ALEX-ander McDowell, clerk of the house of representatives, shows that during the recent session the longest "day" lasted 144 hours, including, of course, recesses. During this "day" eighty roll calls were taken. It is shown by this same report that the number of bills and resolutions introduced in the house during the two sessions of the congress was 18,420, on which reports were made on 2,810 bills and resolutions. The senate sent to the house 1,136 senate bills and resolutions. The house disposed of 2,413 of the measures originating with it, and of 1,012 of the senate bills and resolutions making it a total of 3,430 bills and resolutions acted on. It left on its calendars 405 house and 118 senate bills and resolutions. Fifteen of the members of the house died during the congress, seven resigned and Messrs. Rhea of Kentucky and Butler of Missouri were unseated, the latter twice.

AN INTERESTING FAMILY REUNION WAS recently held in the town of Rumford, Me. It was the reunion of the Thurston family consisting of father and mother, six boys and two girls, the eldest being fifty-six and the youngest forty-

two. The interesting fact was brought out that thus far this family circle has not been broken by death. Referring to this interesting family, the Lewiston (Me.) Journal says: "There are also seventeen grandchildren varying in age from twenty-six to six years, and four great-grandchildren, the youngest of whom, a plump boy weighing ten and one-half pounds, was born on the day of the reunion to the wife of Mr. Carl G. Thurston, of Virginia. It was on Friday, January 29, that the reunion occurred. Mr. and Mrs. Trueworthy Thurston, aged respectively eighty-four and seventy-nine years, assembled their good old-fashioned New England family and partook of a right royal good dinner at the hand of the genial host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Thurston. Mr. and Mrs. Trueworthy Thurston were both born in the town of Monmouth, her maiden name being Rachel Fisher Welch. They were married March 4, 1846. They made their home in Peru, Me., until the fall of 1869. Just after the famous "pumpkin fashet" they moved to Rumford, and settled on the farm where they now reside. At one time this family was widely scattered, the children all having made homes for themselves in other state, some as far west as Chicago. Gradually, however, they came back to their native town and settled on the west bank of the Androscoggin river in what has long been known as the 'Thurston district.'"

AN INTERNATIONAL ANTI-MILITARY CON-gress is to be held in London during the month of May. The governments of England, Italy, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Spain, have already agreed to send representatives. The purpose of this congress is said "to make justice for humanity universal peace." The hope of the leading spirits of this enterprise is to devise plans for doing away with all armed forces. The plan is similar to that entertained by the czar of Russia when he called his famous disarmament convention which resulted in the establishment of The Hague arbitration tribunal. Good results may come from such a conference and yet it is not at all likely that it will be any more successful in the way of disarmament than The Hague conference was.

ACCORDING TO A STATEMENT RECENT-ly issued by the board of directors of the American Locomotive company, the earnings of the company for the nine months ending March 31 amounted to \$23,956,345. This is an increase of \$4,859,607 over the same period of last year. The earnings for the past nine months are very nearly equal to 50 per cent of the outstanding capital of the company. During the past sixty days orders have been received for 600 locomotives and the eight plants of this concern employing more than 16,000 men are said to be busy with rush orders.

ACCORDING TO A CABLEGRAM FROM the Rome correspondent of the Chicago Record-Herald, it is the intention of General Ricciotti Garibaldi, son of the Italian patriot, to bring suit against the government for payment for property which at one time belonged to the crown kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and which, it is claimed, should have been distributed among the Garibaldian volunteers after the war of 1860. This distribution was refused by the elder Garibaldi. The property in question amounts to about \$16,000,000. General Garibaldi contends that his father only had the right to refuse personally to distribute this property. He is ready to compromise his suit if the Garibaldian volunteers each receive 1 franc a day.

ITALIAN SCIENTISTS ARE CONSIDERABLY agitated because of a report made by the director of a hospital attached to the Rowan Medical Academy. The Rome correspondent of the Cincinnati Enquirer says that this report relates to the remarkable case of the apparent death of a young man, 22, who was brought to the hospital dying, and subsequently died, in the opinion of most of the staff. Petteruti decided it was a case of cataleptic trance and treated it accordingly. The patient lay lifeless to all outward indications for 120 days, the doctor daily injecting through the nose one litre of milk and three litres

of boullon. On the one hundred and twentieth day the patient slowly awoke. Three weeks elapsed before he was able to use all his functions normally.

WHEN COMPLETED, THE PANAMA CANAL will save nearly 10,000 nautical miles in a trip from Philadelphia to San Francisco. A writer in the Philadelphia Press points out that at present the distance covered by a steamship route from Philadelphia to Pernambuco, Brazil, is 3,696 nautical miles; from Pernambuco to Punta Arenas, in the Straits of Magellan, 3,113, from Punta Arenas to Panama, 3,992, and from Panama to San Francisco, by way of the Straits of Magellan and stopping at Panama, the distance is 15,078 nautical miles, of which amount 11,801 miles represents the distance between Philadelphia and Panama. When the canal is completed this 11,801 miles will be replaced by 1,981 miles, which is the distance between Philadelphia and Colon, the eastern entrance of the Panama canal. Steaming via Colon and the Panama canal, the vessel will have to cover only 5,258 miles in going from Philadelphia to San Francisco, as against a present distance of 15,078 miles, a cut of two-thirds.

AN INTERESTING POINT HAS BEEN RAISED before the United States supreme court in the case of Thomas E. Kepner. In the Philippine islands Kepner was tried on the charge of sequestrating money as an attorney. The lower court declared him not guilty. The case was appealed to the supreme court of the islands by the government. The supreme court found Kepner guilty. This case was tried under the old Spanish laws, but since the United States congress enacted a law for the civil government of the islands, Kepner now appeals to the United States supreme court on the ground that under the constitution of the United States he could not twice be put in jeopardy for the same offense. Under the Spanish law, the government is allowed to appeal in cases of failure to convict. That, however, is not the rule under our constitution. The case goes before the United States supreme court on a writ of error and the court will have the opportunity of making another effort to explain just how closely the constitution follows the flag.

AN INMATE OF THE MICHIGAN ASYLUM for the insane died recently and his death was attributed to an abscess of the liver. It is said that this man had the habit of swallowing metal, lumps of coal, and other indigestible things. An inspection of the dead man's stomach revealed the following named articles: One 20-penny spike 4 inches long, 32 10-penny nails, 79 8-penny nails, 23 shingle nails, 180 bent nails of various assorted sizes, 29 pieces of wire, different sizes, 1 iron washer 1 1/4 inches in diameter, 4 suspender clasps, 17 buttons, assorted, 126 small stones, 12 pieces of tin, various sizes, 3 screws, upper halves of 3 20-penny spikes, 3 32-calibre cartridge shells, 28 pins. One of the interesting revelations to the physicians was the fact that many of the larger nails were partially eaten by the acids of the stomach.

THOSE WHO CONTEND THAT THERE IS nothing new under the sun will be interested in the announcement that Marconi's system of wireless telegraphy has a rival which is many centuries old. According to a writer in the Chicago Record-Herald, Rev. C. A. Rideout, a missionary of the African Methodist Episcopal church of America, who returned to this country lately on furlough after four years' labor among the native tribes of South Africa in the territory lying west of Natal, thus describes this remarkable system: "A large gourd, such as those grown in many parts of the United States, is hollowed out and thoroughly dried. Then kid's skin, stretched and dried by a native process which makes it as hard and as thin as parchment, is stretched across the hollow of the gourd. It is beaten with a padded drumstick and gives forth a sound which can be heard distinctly at a distance of from five to eight miles. The Basuto country is mountainous and the villages lie along the mountain sides and in little valleys or glens being at a high elevation."