

A Rome cablegram to the Chicago Tribune says that "until the last few years Italy was the only country in Europe showing an excess of males over females. The fact that females are now in excess is attributed to emigration. The census of those knowing how to read and write is not encouraging. In 1872 the average was 31.2 per cent. In 1877 the law for compulsory education was put into effect, and yet the census just completed shows that only 48.5 per cent of the Italians are able to read and write. Newspapers lament the difference between the results and the large sums spent for education and advise a stricter application of the law."

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THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE STEPHENSON county, Illinois, poor farm, James Eells by name, says that after a careful investigation he has concluded that paupers are longer lived than other people. In a conversation with a representative of the Chicago Tribune, Mr. Eells said that he has in his charge thirty-four people whose ages aggregate 2,387 years. The ages of one party of seven people footed 600 years, the average being a fraction over 88 years. Another party numbered seven, and their ages aggregated 527 years, the average being 75. There is still another party of from eighteen to twenty persons, whose ages average between 60 and 70 years, and the average of the whole bunch is over 70 years.

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IT IS ALSO STATED BY THE TRIBUNE writer that Superintendent Keyes of the Kane county, Illinois, poor farm, has a large contingent of old people. Some of them are so old that it is impossible to fix their age to a certainty. Some of them move about over the premises, a few being helpless. There is one colored woman who Mr. Keyes says is at least 125 years of age. She is an inveterate talker and singer, was born a slave, and served different masters in Dixie. She talks continually of plantation days, imagines that she is in a cotton field harvesting this great staple of the south land. From her disconnected talks one is able to take up the threads of some of the most interesting epochs of ante-war days. She is tractable and gives less trouble than many others of lighter color.

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THAT THE HEART OF THE LUMBER BELT in the United States has moved westward is an interesting fact presented by a writer in the Review of Reviews. This writer says that at the beginning of the last century, almost the entire wood supply came from the then untouched forests of the Penobscot river region of Maine. As the woodsmen cut deep into the heart of the wood the industry was forced to find other fields from which to draw its supply, and the virgin forests of the south and of the states bordering on the great lakes were cut in. Although these regions are by no means depleted today, the Pacific coast is rapidly becoming the heart of the lumber trade. And what wonder, for in the three states of California, Oregon and Washington there is at least one-third of the entire supply of standing timber in the United States. In figures it amounts to more than 600,000,000,000 feet of uncut wood. The forest reserves and national parks set apart by the United States government within the limits of these three states aggregate an area of 32,428 square miles, or more than 22 per cent of the total wooded area of the states. In the state of Oregon alone, where a careful examination has been made, the national census officials have estimated the standing timber on these reservations at 55,000,000,000 feet, or one-fourth of the state's total supply.

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WHILE IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR SO-called conscience money to be returned to the United States government, the Washington correspondent of the Des Moines Register and Leader says that when a man has once secured a pension, it is the rarest thing in the world to find him willing to forego it. It is thus that Pension Commissioner Ware regards the following letter of sufficient unique interest to give it to the public. At the pension department at Washington the following letter has been received: "Philadelphia, Pa., May 3, 1903.—To the Commissioner of Pensions.—Dear Sir: I would ask you to please remove my name from the list of applicants for a pension by request. I am working at my trade now and making a living. I am improving right along and do not wish to be a burden to the government, and don't think I will ever be in need of a pension. Respectfully, John L. Riegler."

The Commoner.

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT IS BEING made by a Marion, Ind., merchant, A. F. Norton by name. The Marion correspondent of the Chicago Tribune says that Mr. Norton, who is conducting a number of grocery stores "as he believes Christ would conduct them," has decided to establish a department store in a building that long has been used by the Presbyterians as a church. The old church was sold and the congregation is now erecting a structure a few blocks away. Mr. Norton, it is said, will rent the old church. He will hang a bell in the steeple and when the store opens in the morning will have it proclaimed over the city. The building will be cleared of all its present furnishings and the different departments will be established on the first and second floors. The proprietor will hold to his rule that he will not try to get rich, and will pay his employees every evening. He will not employ as many clerks as other merchants, as he does not believe in keeping an eye on people to prevent shoplifting. He holds that if a man is trusted he will not betray his trust, and for this reason only a few clerks will be necessary. The goods will be placed on counters and the customers will have the privilege of waiting on themselves and then go to the cashier and pay for whatever articles they may wish to carry away.

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THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY HELEN Keller in the preparation of her book entitled "The Story of My Life," is told by a writer in the San Francisco Chronicle in this way: First of all, Miss Keller puts down her ideas "in Braille," as the blind express it; that is to say, in the system of "points" raised on paper by means of a stylus and slate devised to aid the blind; these "points" being read afterward by passing the sensitive fingers over them. When all of this Braille work has been completed Miss Keller goes to her typewriter and uses these notes as a guide to the rewriting of the story. As soon as a page of matter is typewritten it is, so to speak, lost to Miss Keller, who has to depend upon her faithful teacher, Miss Sullivan, to repeat it to her by spelling out each sentence by means of the hands. It is a tedious task, especially as some of the pages have to be read again and again, with changes here and there, before Miss Keller is satisfied. Then when the proofs are sent to her, all this slow process of spelling word after word has to be gone through once more, so that each word that Helen Keller writes goes through her fingers at least five times. It will be a satisfaction to everybody to know that the book promises to be one of the most successful biographical writings of the year, and Miss Keller is likely to reap substantial rewards for the extraordinary ability and patience which she has shown in her work.

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SOME ONE HAS BEEN SEARCHING IN THE writings of old and new authors and he has been rewarded by the discovery of some peculiar mistakes. The result of these investigations is told in the "Children's Visitor," in this way: In "Ivanhoe" Sir Walter Scott makes a knight of Richard I. converse with a contemporary of William the Conqueror, who was Richard's grandfather. The new moon appears in the western sky and sets from the moment it becomes visible; but in "The Children of Gibeon" Walter Besant caused a new moon to rise in the east at 2 o'clock in the morning. Trollope makes one of his characters, Andy Scott, come whistling up the street with a cigar in his mouth. The man must have had a wonderful grip in his lips to smoke while whistling. In "Don Quixote" Sancho continues to ride on his donkey after having lamented the animal's death. In "The Reign of Law," by James Lane Allen, one of the characters refers to a book which was not published for ten years after the time the reference was said to have been made. Hamlin Garland wrote in 1896 "The Rose of Dutcher's Cooly," and one of the characters in the novel is given three different names. Jacob Riis tells in "The Making of an American" that while a young reporter, in giving the particulars of a river's overflow, he described a stone floating on the waste of waters. But that was not more wonderful than the case of our old friend, Robinson Crusoe, who, after taking off his clothes to swim to the wreck, took the precaution to fill his pockets full of biscuits. Neither was it more surprising than the discovery by a Paris reporter, who found in the Seine "the nude corpse of a man with ten sous in his waistcoat pocket."

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THAT IT REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE MONEY to maintain a strenuous president is a fact presented by the Washington correspondent

for the Chicago American. This correspondent presents a few items that Mr. Roosevelt has expended for luxuries and travel as follows: Special trains, service, etc., \$250,000; revamping and changing White house, \$475,445; private tennis court, \$2,000; new executive office, \$65,196; increase in White house running expenses, \$25,000; new fittings and furniture for the Mayflower, president's yacht, \$100,000; keeping craft in commission two months last year, \$15,105; repairs last year, \$23,297.33; estimated cost of repairs this year, \$30,000. Thus it will be seen that Roosevelt has cost \$986,043.33 in extras to the people since he has been in office.

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GENERAL NELSON A. MILES HAS WRITTEN to the Army and Navy Journal a letter in which the general says that he went to the Philippines not as a tourist, but in an official capacity, and that the instructions addressed to him as Lieutenant general commanding the army, came from the president in which General Miles was directed to give special attention to "the instruction, discipline and supplies of the army." Referring to his much discussed official report of the Philippines, General Miles says that "no one can have a more sacred regard for the honor of the army than myself;" and referring to the cruelties in the Philippines, General Miles says: "It is not idle to assume that campaigning in the Philippines has conditions that warrant resort to medieval cruelty and a departure from the honorable method of conducting warfare and that such departures as have existed should be overlooked and condoned. It is most gratifying that the serious offenses have not been committed by the soldiers unless they were under the direct orders of certain officers who were responsible. Soldiers have withheld fire when ordered to shoot prisoners, protested against acts of cruelty, and written to relatives at home urging them to take action to put a stop to those crimes. It will ever be one of the glories of the army that such deeds, committed by whatever authority, are abhorrent to the American soldier. The officers who are responsible for using the cruel Macabees do not by any means constitute the American army, and there must be an unmistakable line drawn between the great body of honorable and faithful officers and brave soldiers whose records have been commendable and those of whatever station whose acts have received and should receive the earnest condemnation of all honorable men."

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AN ENGLISH EXPERT OFFERS THE INFORMATION that the supply of coal yet remaining to be mined in the United Kingdom amounts to 80,684,000,000 tons, which at the present rate of mining, would last 370 years and that therefore Great Britain is likely to be a competitor of the United States in the world's coal market for some time. This expert gives the total output of coal in the world in 1900 as 767,636,204 tons, of which Great Britain produced 229,000,000 tons, or 30 per cent, and the United States 245,000,000 tons, leaving a balance of about 35 per cent for the rest of the world.

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THE FIRST FULL BLOODED INDIAN TO ENLIST in the navy is doing duty on the Minneapolis. Referring to this Indian, the New York Tribune says: "He is known in the Crow tribe, of which he is a member, as Great Whitebear, and is descended from the Indian chief of that name. Whitebear, as he is called at the navy yard, enlisted as a landsman. He was educated at the Carlisle Indian school, and has a brother who formerly served in the United States cavalry. I have been here two days, and the officer has placed me in charge of a squad," said the Indian Jackie, with great pride, when asked how he liked his experience so far. "I felt when I left Carlisle that I would like to do something for my country, and the life of a sailor appealed to me. So I enlisted. They make a good American of you at Carlisle. I believe the discipline and training of the navy will be a good thing for Carlisle graduates, and I hope other Indians will follow my example." Whitebear is twenty-three years old, and is a fine specimen of physical manhood."

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THE LARGEST INDIVIDUAL LIFE INSURANCE policyholder in the world, excepting the King of England, is Rodman Wanamaker, son of John Wanamaker. Young Wanamaker recently obtained a policy in the sum of \$1,000,000, the premium on this policy alone being \$30,000 a year. He already carried policies aggregating \$1,000,000 and his policies now amount to \$2,000,000.