

to the New York Times, John Beck, one of the best known mining men of the state and once owner of the Bullion Beck mine, is the head of a company that is forming to manufacture rubber from a weed that grows in this state and Idaho. Beck is the discoverer. For two years he has been conducting experiments until satisfied that his discovery was of commercial value. Then he took steps to promote the industry on a large scale. The plant contains a white substance, which, when extracted and heated chemically, is said to form a perfect substitute for rubber. In addition the fibre is said to be an excellent substitute for horsehair in filling mattresses, while the ashes of the weed contain a high percentage of potash. Experiments have been made in various parts of Utah with a view of growing the plant, and it was found that it could be cultivated as readily as corn or wheat. Several thousand acres are to be devoted to growing the plant.

AMONG THE MANY QUEER DEVICES OFFERED to the government army board of ordnance and fortifications was one which contemplated the use of large fish, preferably sharks, for the propulsion of submarine torpedoes. The Washington Star says: "According to the plan proposed a shark is to be imprisoned in a tube at the rear end of the projectile, and is to be controlled in its movements by the active application of wireless telegraphy. In case the shark became restless and attempted to swim away on his own account it was to be given an electric shock, and in that way kept on its course until the torpedo had reached its target. Another remarkably ingenious proposition emanated from the same fertile brain, and contemplated the employment of war balloons in any desired direction. In this case also the birds, harnessed to the aerial vehicle, were to be controlled in their movements by a system of wireless telegraphy. These balloons were to be provided with torpedoes or bombs, which could be dropped at any desired point by the use of wireless telegraphy."

THERE ARE SEVERAL TOWNS IN THIS country which are occupied exclusively by negroes. It is said that Indian territory has several of these towns. According to the Kansas City Journal: "One is called Rentville, after one of the promoters, and is located fifteen miles south of Muskogee, on the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railway. The Creek nation has a number of other negro towns, among them being one known as Wildcat. It is a government town site. Everything in the place is the property of colored people. The people of no other race are allowed to settle there. It is said by those acquainted with the place that if an occasional white person chances to come in on business or otherwise the word is soon passed around to him: 'White man, don't let the sun go down on you here.' A hint is all that is necessary. Another negro town is Wybark, located on the Arkansas river, at the point where the Oklahoma branch of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railway leaves the main line north of Muskogee. This place is a shack town and is well known to commercial men making the territory. By many it is regarded as upper 'tendom' in colored society on account of the location of a negro academy within a short distance."

THE COAL COMMISSION APPOINTED BY the state of Pennsylvania recently made its report, and this document contains much of interest. It is said that the members of the commission reached the conclusion that at a depth of 3,000 feet the temperature of the earth would amount to 98 degrees Fahrenheit, but it was thought that a depth of at least 4,000 feet might ultimately be reached in coal mining. A writer in the Chicago Chronicle, referring to the findings of this commission, says: "The rate of increase, the commissioners thought, might for ordinary cases be assumed to be 1 degree Fahrenheit for every 60 feet, but it is in reality impossible to give any fixed rate of increase. The report of the British association committee on underground temperatures during the last thirty years tends to show, not only that the temperature gradient varies considerably in different localities, but that it is not easy to reduce a fixed law of increase applicable to all cases. In some parts of western America the heat at 3,000 feet is almost unbearable, while at the Calumet and Hecla copper mine in north Michigan, U. S. A., there is a rise of only 4 degrees Fahrenheit in a depth of 4,400 feet, although no artificial ventilation is resorted to. The temperature of the coal on discovery at the Rosebridge colliery in Lancashire

was stated by the management to be 93 degrees Fahrenheit, but it afterward fell to 63 degrees Fahrenheit."

IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT SOME years ago when the project of the great Siberian railroad was broached by Russia, much enthusiasm was displayed in the scheme. The claim is now advanced by the New York World, however, that the condition of the Russian railway system, as a whole, is not very satisfactory from the financier's standpoint. It is declared that the federal roads in Russia are worked at a tremendous loss, supposed to be some \$200,000,000 a year. The World says: "The Siberian railroad, which would be chiefly used in case of war with Japan, is not yet completed around Lake Balkal. Ten millions are asked to complete that link in communication and \$300,000 to connect the trans-Balkal with the Manchurian road. Consul Greener, in Vladivostok, reports that the Ussuri line is a financial failure. The deficits have been considerable. The Pekin-Kalgan line is to be built as a 'Chinese road' and to have Chinese employes, but the money is furnished by the Russo-Chinese bank. That Russifies it."

REFERENCE IS MADE IN THIS SAME report to the manner in which trade conditions are subordinated to military needs. According to the New York World, Mr. Greener says: "The Moscow manufacturers seem to have given up all intention of competing with the Japanese, who have taken complete possession of the Manchurian dry goods trade to such an extent that it seems impossible for the Russians to dislodge them. With regard to the transportation of tea, the Russian importers are still shy of the Manchurian railway, receiving the product by other ways, for the reason that they cannot get their goods insured by Russian companies for transit across Manchuria." This seems almost incredible, and if true it enables the observer to put his finger upon the weak point in the Russian armor. The bear is not businesslike. And in the end war bows to business. Meanwhile tourists can have lots of fun with the Siberian road. A round-trip first-class ticket from London or Paris to Peking—either going by rail both ways or going by rail and returning by steamship about Asia, with stop-off privileges—will soon be available for \$204. Considering the distance this is cheap enough.

THE INTERESTING QUESTION, "WHO reads all the books?" is being agitated in London just now. It is claimed that every day of the last year thirty-three new books were produced by the literary genius of the United Kingdom, that every one of them is on the shelves of the British museum, taking up a quarter of a mile of room, but it is wondered just how many of them will be remembered when next New Year's day comes round. The editor of the Publishers' Circular recently compiled some figures which show that of the 8,381 books which appeared for the first time last year, about 30 per cent were fiction and children's books. These new books issued are classified by the London correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean as follows: Theology 639, educational 650, novels and juvenile works 1,859, political, social, and commercial 509, arts and science 418, travel and geography 172, history and biography 482, poetry and drama 303, year books and serials 457, medicine 187, belles-lettres, essays, 284, miscellaneous 687. In only two of these divisions were fewer books published last year than in the year before; and the total of books published last year was exactly one thousand more than in 1902.

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF MISSIONS HAS recently decided to build a new vessel for missionary work in the Pacific islands. According to the Boston correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean, the work in the Pacific islands must be kept up by the American branch for some time yet, despite the fact that the Gilbert islands have passed to Great Britain and the Carolines to Germany. The Inter-Ocean correspondent says: "Instead of the old Morning Star, which made an annual voyage from Honolulu through Micronesia, a tour of ten or twelve months, it is proposed to build a wooden vessel of not above three hundred tons, with auxiliary power, to remain in Micronesian waters. There are now regular steamship lines from Hong Kong to Sydney touching at Caroline and Marshall ports, to which supplies can be forwarded, giving the stations a twice-a-year service. For this purpose the vessel need not be as large as the last Morning Star, yet she must have auxiliary steam power, to insure

safety in frequent calms and swift currents. The children of the United States have built four vessels, each named Morning Star, since 1856. Two have been wrecked and two have been sold after surviving their usefulness. For these four vessels the children have contributed \$114,533. The board has now on hand for a new vessel not far from \$18,000; the sum of \$20,000 is to be provided. The prudential committee is confident the Sunday schools will respond liberally."

IT IS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN THAT Andrew Carnegie, the steel trust magnate, was the third man wounded on the Union side in the civil war. The story is told by the New York Tribune in this way: "The ironmaster met Commissioner Ware during the recent international arbitration conference in Washington. Mr. Carnegie said he thought he might get a pension. 'I shall be delighted to pass on your case,' said Colonel Ware, who was unable to make out what Mr. Carnegie was driving at. 'It was this way,' said Mr. Carnegie. 'In April, 1861, the 19th it was, I was on a train between Baltimore and Annapolis. That was while I was an operator, too. I noticed that rebels had cut the telegraph wires and had attached them to a stake which they had driven into the ground. The wires were effectively "grounded," and I knew that no business could be done on that line until the wires were freed from the stake. I was the boy to do it. I jumped off the train (I could jump in those days, too), and I hastily seized the wires. They were drawn taut, so that when one was freed it flew up and caught me here under the nose. When I was able to get up my face was cut from ear to ear and I was bleeding profusely. When I got to Baltimore the doctors said it was a serious cut. That same day the mob assaulted the 6th Massachusetts and wounded several men. I figured it out that I was the third man wounded during the civil war.'"

THE NAVY DEPARTMENT RECENTLY DECIDED that the old monitor boats, which were in such prominent use during the civil war, are to be sold for old junk, because it costs more to keep them on the naval list than they are worth. These monitors are known as the Nahant, Jason, Canonicus, Lehigh, and Montauk, and are among the last of the old navy and the first of the iron-hull vessels to be built by this government. The Philadelphia correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean, speaking of the proposed sale of these historic vessels, says: "One of the officers attached to the navy yard said: 'I don't favor the selling of the old vessels, and think the government should distribute them to the various navy yards, where they could be put on view. They are relics of one of the greatest conflicts ever fought. The history made by them will forever live, and for this reason I think it a shame that the old vessels will be taken apart and sold for junk.' The Lehigh and Canonicus were the first of nineteen monitors to be built by the government. The Monitor of civil war fame was the first iron-hull war vessel owned by the United States government. She proved so successful in the famous battle with the confederate ship Merrimac that congress ordered built with all possible haste ten vessels of the Lehigh type and nine of the Canonicus type."

A NAME IS WANTED THAT WILL CORRECTLY and adequately describe an inland city which is open to the trade of the world, a city not approachable by water, and one where the so-called "open door" policy prevails. A writer in the Washington Times, referring to the search for a suitable name for such a city, says: "James W. Davidson, United States consul at Tamsul, Formosa, who has just returned from Manchuria, where he investigated commercial conditions for the state department, has tried for three months to invent the much-needed word, but has finally given it up. Mukden, Manchuria, the city which is to be opened to our trade by the new commercial treaty between this country and China, is the city of cities in need of just the designation Mr. Davidson has sought to coin. It is inland, consequently the term port conveys the wrong idea concerning the city. It has been designated by the press as an "open port," and the result is that most persons think it a seaport. It not only cannot be approached by water, but it is not on the railroad. Mr. Davidson does not approve of the term "open city," as it suggests a city where the moral tone is not up to standard. "Treaty city" is not definite enough. "Free city" is also objected to on the ground that it may mean many other things besides a city open to foreign trade."