

# CURRENT TOPICS

WHEAT conditions were unfavorable during the last season throughout the eastern end of the northern belt of states extending from the Mississippi river to Puget Sound, but according to the estimates of the agricultural department in the western end, the crop was better and larger than last year. The Washington correspondent for the New York Commercial says: "This strip of territory annually produces approximately one-third of the entire wheat crop of the United States. Despite the fact that there was much damage from rust and from drought in the near northwest it seems probable that the final estimate of the Agricultural Department will show the falling off in the crop of 1904 to have been smaller in the northern belt of states than in the rest of the country as a whole."

ACCORDING to this same authority, in the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon—which is the territory under consideration—the indications are that the 1904 crop will amount to 194,786,112 bushels. This includes both winter and spring wheat. No winter wheat is raised in Minnesota, either of the Dakotas or in Montana, but both spring and winter wheat are raised in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. The combined crop last year, for these states was 213,483,667 bushels, so the falling off in this year's crop for this northern tier of great wheat-producing states was 18,697,555 bushels. There was a loss of 20,339,100 bushels in Minnesota and the two Dakotas alone; and there was, therefore, a slight increase in the combined crop of Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon.

THE best wheat conditions anywhere in the country, according to the agricultural department's estimate, were in Idaho and Washington. The production of wheat in Idaho is relatively small, but Washington has become one of the principal wheat producing states. Both states are remarkable for their large acreage yield, Idaho holding the record last year for the yield per acre of winter wheat. Montana's wheat crop is never large—2,500,000 bushels being about the average—but the state heads the list in her remarkable acreage yield. In 1903 the yield of spring wheat per acre in Montana was 28.2 bushels, but this was reduced this year to 23.9 bushels, according to the October estimate of the agricultural department.

THE estimated acreage crop and yield per acre in each of the spring wheat states in the northern belt are given in the following table, the figures being based on the October estimate of the agricultural department:

Spring Wheat, 1904—		Yield	
Crop, bu.	Acreage	per acre.	
Minnesota .....	68,344,256	5,339,395	12.8
North Dakota .....	53,892,181	4,567,134	11.8
South Dakota .....	30,063,434	3,287,165	9.3
Montana .....	2,595,731	108,608	23.9
Idaho .....	6,075,380	244,975	24.8
Washington .....	11,610,912	614,334	18.9
Oregon .....	9,994,957	657,563	15.2
Spring Wheat, 1903—		Yield	
Crop, bu.	Acreage	per acre.	
Minnesota .....	70,652,597	5,393,328	13.1
North Dakota .....	55,240,580	4,349,652	12.7
South Dakota .....	47,252,994	3,424,130	13.8
Montana .....	2,784,327	98,735	28.2
Idaho .....	2,445,048	114,791	21.3
Washington .....	12,469,166	608,252	20.5
Oregon .....	5,481,246	316,835	17.3

The winter wheat crop in Idaho, Washington and Oregon this year, and last year, according to the agricultural department's estimates, was as follows:

	1903, bu.	1904, bu.
Idaho .....	2,682,939	4,058,848
Washington .....	7,517,179	11,426,061
Oregon .....	6,957,581	7,828,034

The Commercial's correspondent adds: "In view of the great damage to the wheat crop in the Northwest on account of the rust during the last season, it would not be surprising if the cultivation of durum or macaroni wheats were pursued more generally within the next few years. It has been shown that durum wheat is not susceptible to rust, and it is not adversely affected by drought."

FORMER Mayor S. F. Smith of Davenport, Ia., was recently sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in the penitentiary. Smith was convicted of embezzling \$120,000 which he held as trustee for several large estates. He is a son of Samuel Francis Smith, the author of "America."

DR. W. T. BELFIELD of Chicago recently delivered an address to the members of the Chicago Woman's Aid in Sinai Temple and this address will be interesting to men and women everywhere and will undoubtedly be with many of the so-called stronger sex. "In the lower organisms," said the lecturer, "the female eats the male. A little higher up in the scale of evolution the female discovers that the male can work and supply her with food, while she reproduces the species. As a worker the male developed certain qualities unknown to the female—qualities that are especially developed in the very highest animals, the human race. But the female remains, even in the human species, as the conservator of the race and the depository of all the virtues that render society possible and that perpetuate human culture."

WOMAN is superior mentally and physically to men, according to Dr. Belfield. The doctor added: "She endures more and is less subject to the diseases caused by the ravages of microbes in the human system. For every 105 boys born there are 100 girls, yet when the period of infancy has elapsed, with all the losses due to infantile diseases, the number of females equals that of the males. The longevity of women is greater than that of men. To prove the superiority of women mentally consider the matter of color-blindness. Perception of color is the last attainment of the human optic; it is the most subtle faculty of human evolution. Out of every 100 women one is afflicted with color-blindness. Out of every 100 men sixteen are afflicted with color-blindness. Boys born of a color-blind father and a normal mother will be color-blind, but girls born of the same union will have a perfect perception of colors. The ratio, 16 to 1, expresses about the physical and mental superiority of women to men. If men are silver women are golden. The color perception of women does not proceed from their constant inspection of ribbons and fabrics, but from immemorial superiority of sex."

NO OTHER superstition is more general than that relating to horseshoe luck. A writer in the Duluth Herald says: "Ever since horses began to wear shoes those crescents of iron have been accounted lucky emblems of all peoples, races and nations that have been acquainted with their use, says the Chicago Chronicle. The Chinese, for instance, say they nail them up over their doors as a charm against evil spirits, because of the close resemblance in shape between them and the sacred snake, Nagandra, one of their principal deities. Ask a Turkish Mohammedan for information on the subject and he will tell you that it is because they are in form like a crescent, the sacred emblem of Islam. A Polish Jew will explain that at the passover the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and doorposts, in the manner directed by their ritual, forms the chief points of an arch; hence, obviously, the value of arch-shaped talismans, such as horseshoes are. The stolid and unimaginative Russian peasant, on the other hand, maintains that the luck associated with the horseshoes is due chiefly to the metal, irrespective of its shape, iron being traditionally a charm wherewith to nullify the malevolent designs of evil spirits and goblins."

VERY different is the story by which the Irishman seeks to account for his liking for the same symbol. The Herald writer says: "The name 'Ironclad' or 'Ireland,' he will tell you, originated as follows: The whole island was once submerged in the sea, out of which it only rose once in seven years, and then only for a short time. Many attempts had been made to break the spell and induce the country to remain permanently above the water, but all were vain, until one day a daring adventurer threw a horseshoe from a boat on the topmost peak of Wicklow mountains just as they were disappearing beneath

the waves. Then, at last, was the ban removed. The Emerald Isle never forwent to rise again from the ocean depths into which it had sunk. And it has been dry land—more or less—ever since. In England, up to comparatively recent times, horseshoes were extensively used almost everywhere as an amulet against witchcraft, and the custom is not even yet an extinct one. No witch, it used to be said, could enter a building over the door of which a horseshoe had been affixed, prongs downward. The origin of this particular belief is referable to the old legend of St. Dunstan. This versatile English ecclesiastic was a skilled farrier, and one day while at work in his forge, the evil one entered in disguise and requested Dunstan to shoe his 'single hoof.' The saint, although he at once recognized his malign customer, acceded, but caused him so much pain during the operation that Satan begged him to desist. This Dunstan did, but only after he had made the evil one promise that neither he nor any of the lesser spirits, his servants, would ever molest the inmates of a house where a horseshoe was displayed."

THE annual report of the Western Union Telegraph company gives total revenues of \$29,250,290, an increase of \$81,703; total expenses, \$21,361,591, an increase of \$408,708; net revenue, \$1,887,475, a decrease of \$2,326,997. The surplus for the year, after charges, was \$1,861,704, a decrease of \$407,018. Henry A. Bishop, son of the late W. D. Bishop, was elected to his father's place in the directorate. A. R. Brewer, secretary of the company, was elected a director in the place of the late John K. Cowan. The remainder of the board were re-elected. During the year 66,153 miles of wire have been added, making the total wire mileage of the company 1,155,405.

THE question "why does the dog hate the cat?" has been solved by a writer in the Washington Post. This writer says: "Scientists have been investigating the enmity between these animals, and they believe that the instinctive hatred which certain beasts feel for each other is due to inheritance from ancient times, when the animals met in a wild state and preyed on each other. Now this enmity is not to be explained by anything that happens between dogs and cats in domesticity, or anything that ever happened between them as long ago as human history goes. In all these thousands of years dogs and cats have been kept as pets, and of all animals they are the two which should be the most friendly. But the reverse is the case. One naturalist, Dr. Zell, seeks it in the fact that the common cat not only looks like, but smells like, the great cats of prey. And of those cats of prey, there is one, much like a domestic cat in many ways, which hunts dogs of preference. This big cat is the leopard. The domestic cat and her larger relative, the wild cat, have never harmed the race of dogs; but their great speckled cousin is, and always has been, the most ferocious of dog-murderers, and the cat must pay for it. Authorities agree there is no animal that the leopard would rather eat than the dog; as a result, there are many villages in the districts in which leopards are plentiful where nobody can keep a dog. The great cats will not hesitate to break into the houses to seize their favorite dish. But says the doubter, the modern dog certainly could not have known leopards in many thousands of years. He has been a domestic pet in regions where there have been no leopards since man first appeared. That is true, says Dr. Zell, but he points to the fact that dogs have a habit of turning around several times before they lie down. This, he says, is due to the fact that when they were in a wild state they had to do this to press down leaves and twigs in order to prepare a bed for themselves; and as they have not overcome this habit in all their years of domesticity, it is quite natural that they should still inherit fierce hatred of any creature that smells like a leopard."

THE lesson in campaign manners taught to Republicans by Judge Parker when he sent his letter to the compiler of the democratic campaign textbook saying that there should be "no word that reflected upon the personal honor and integrity of President Roosevelt," has been generally and favorably commented upon. The New York