

Bird Murder and Women's Hats.

In spite of the crusade that humane and sensible persons have been waging for years against what has sometimes been dubbed "murderous millinery," the ceaseless destruction of birds of all distinction goes on unchecked. The gradual diminution of song birds and others of great service to the farmer has been widely recognized. Massachusetts indeed has passed a law punishing the shooting or trapping of other than game birds with a heavy fine. But, in spite of all attempts to lessen the murderous tribute exacted by fashion and feminine vanity, the war against the feathered tribes proceeds more remorselessly than ever before. This is true abroad as well as in America. Not long ago a London auction room sold a single consignment of nearly 500,000 birds, which had been gathered from different parts of the world. A late fashionable item in a Paris paper announces that "birds are worn more than ever and blouses made entirely of feathers are coming into fashion." Wings no longer suffice, but women carry on their pretty but cruel and thoughtless heads whole charnel houses of beaks and claws and bones and feathers and glass eyes. Fashion never yet demanded a more wicked and absurd sacrifice on its altar, always smoking for fresh prey. All the considerations involved in the question—its wastefulness in the economy of nature, the evil and cruelty involved, the injury done indirectly to the interest of the farmer, the blow struck at the aesthetic enjoyment of country life—have been frequently presented, and yet feather brains will insist on wearing feathered hats.

The value of precious stones entered in the appraiser's office of New York for July surpassed the showing of the preceding month by \$12,143,395. People don't buy precious stones unless money is plenty, so one is justified in deducing an agreeable business omen from the sign.

The British-American Boundary.

It seems singular at first blush that down to the very present the exact line separating Canada and the United States has never been accurately charted. It is one of the questions which will be acted on by the joint commission at Quebec. Disputes over such uncertainties have often endangered the peace of nations. It came within one of plunging us into war with England when the quarrel over the Oregon boundary reached an acute stage. The battlecry ran through the country, "Fifty-four forty, or fight." Not very long ago the situation became grave in the matter of the Venezuelan line, which also involved this country as the defender of the Monroe doctrine. These issues lie dormant perhaps for a long time and then suddenly spring into an

alarming activity. We shall now have this open question forever settled. The parts of the boundary which are to be arranged are the division between Alaska and northwestern Canada, the portion which crosses Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the section marking the boundary between St. Mary's river and the Lake of the Woods.

In the first of these cases the surveyors of Canada and the United States have so far come to an agreement that the basis for an understanding is clearly defined. The rich goldfields of the region through which a prospective line passes have spurred prompt and definite action. There are less accurate data for determining the line westward of Isle Royale, in Lake Superior, extending to the northwestern shore of the Lake of the Woods. The country up to this day even has been imperfectly studied, and the description of points of departure in a zigzag course as laid down in the treaty of 1842 proves to have been the merest guesswork, some of the small lakes specified being known not to exist at all. The old maps in existence are quite vague and unreliable. It would seem that a surveying party should have gone over this ground in anticipation of the work of the commission. What ground of accurate knowledge there is in this case it is not easy to see. The old line established by the treaty of Ghent and the Webster-Ashburton treaty of 1842, cutting Lakes Erie and Ontario, is known by the late reports of army engineers, published by the hydrographic office, to be quite incorrect. In both sections of boundary some approximate decision only can be reached. But with a desire on both sides to put the matter out of future question there will not be much trouble in finding a basis. The disposition of a few hundred square miles of land and water is unimportant to either country. It is only when two peoples wish to quarrel that their commissioners would split hairs about such a matter.

The most readable of all books, books which never grow stale, are memoirs of eminent people, full of personalities and gossip. We like to know the weaknesses perhaps of celebrated men and women. It consoles us for our own inferiority. This may be the reason why *Truth and The World of London* and their congeners in other countries are so successful.

An interesting economic sign is perceptible in the action of those cotton spinning masters at Fall River, Mass., who have refused to limit their production in co-operation with others who wish to lessen loss by smaller output. The progressives believe that by fitting their mills with looms of more ingenious pattern they can produce prints and the more costly cloths which their rivals with cruder methods and less skillful operatives cannot make. This is the

sound principle of manufacturing—to do that which can be done most effectively under a certain set of conditions, and not to continue in time honored blundering. The conservatives, even of every productive center in the north, where the raw material is far away, will be ultimately driven to that class of products where the chief cost is that of highly skilled labor and the best machinery.

The movement started by the Kansas farmers to present some substantial memorial to Joe Leiter, whose speculation in wheat put so much money in their purses, has an element of humor in it. They can raise big wheat crops, but not crops of "Joe Leiters" so philanthropic as to give millions to the horny handed sons of toil at the expense of his father's millions.

Dr. Domingos Freyre of Rio Janeiro has conducted some very timely experiments with soil taken from a cemetery near Rio which had been removed from the graves of victims of the yellow fever. His series of cultures with the resultant fluids produced conditions in animal bodies exact counterparts of those created by yellow fever. From the same cultures he also produced a fluid, to be used as vaccine is, with the effect of propagating, a perfectly safe form of the dreadful disease. The statement that the soil in tropical cemeteries is so apt to be germ laden suggests interesting hints for sanitary measures to be used in dealing with tropical pests.

The Egyptian sirdar, General Herbert Kitchener, is only a practical soldier without political pull. His great genius, however, as shown in the Egyptian campaigns, makes it probable that he will yet be in command at the Horse guards. He and Lord Roberts are without doubt the most gifted soldiers in the British service.

The investigation held before the interstate commerce commission recently, regarding the American status of the Canadian Pacific railroad, made the public acquainted with some curious facts as alleged relating to passenger rate schedules. It was stated that the Canadian Pacific had forced companies to reduce rates from New York to St. Paul and other western points to 1 cent a mile, and that this cut had resulted in the loss of many millions to the United States.

The new America's cup challenger, Sir Thomas Lipton, is not satisfied with a sporting ambition. He is willing to be known also as a philanthropist, for he has just sent a check for £100,000 to the Princess of Wales, who is desirous to organize a system of dining rooms for the poor where they can get a good meal for a trifle. We think the more of the sporting baronet for his generosity, but none the less we shall keep that America's cup to drink his health in.