

**THE BOER WAR.** Lord Roberts has again assumed the offensive and has started his forward movement toward Bloemfontein. The waterworks in the vicinity of Bloemfontein which had been in the possession of the Boers for several weeks, were retaken. The next move of Roberts was for the relief of Wepener. General French, who has, with so much skill, conducted the cavalry maneuvers, added new laurels to his name by raising the siege of Wepener, which had been in progress for several weeks. The Boers, with their accustomed skill, decamped and beat a hasty retreat in the direction of Ladybrand, with French and his cavalry division in pursuit. The plan of campaign here was a reproduction of the movement against Cronje at Paardeberg, in which the cavalry under French went ahead and overtook Cronje and held him until the infantry arrived. After a siege of ten days Cronje surrendered.

French was not destined to be so successful in the retreat from Wepener. The Boers were overtaken at Thaba-anchu. The British pursued in three columns. This force was combined for a united attack at Thabaanchu. But before the British had a chance to begin operations their elusive enemy disappeared. There is slight prospect of engaging the Boers in a decisive conflict. French will probably have to content himself with harrassing small detachments of the enemy whenever an opportunity is afforded and preventing, if possible, the detached bands of the Boer army reaching the main force at Kroonstadt. All efforts to relieve the siege of Mafeking have failed.

#### CHEAPENED PRODUCTION.

The following is from the address delivered by T. B. Thurber, President of the United States Export association, to the Trans-Mississippi congress, April 17:

Power and machinery brought to bear upon our wonderful natural resources have so increased production that wider markets are necessary if we would escape in the future more frequent periods of overstocked home markets, idle mills, and commercial crises.

Hon. Carroll D. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor, and one of our most conservative statisticians, recently stated the result of his investigations of the relative productive power of hand and machine labor.

A thousand paper bags could formerly be made in six hours and thirty minutes by hand; they are now made in forty minutes with the aid of a machine. To rule ten reams of paper on both sides by hand required 4,800 hours; with a ruling machine the work is done in two hours and thirty minutes of one man's time. In shelling corn by hand, sixty-six hours and forty minutes would be required to shell a quantity which can be handled by a machine in thirty-six minutes. A

mowing machine cuts seven times as much grass per hour as one man can cut with a scythe.

One horse-power is equivalent to the power of six men. Thus, if the work of 63,481 men in the flour mills of the United States is supplemented with the use of 752,365 horse-power, the power is equivalent to the work of 4,514,190 additional men. In other words, the power does seventy-one times as much work as the employees.

In 1890 there were over 30,000 locomotives in this country. It would take 57,940,320 horses to do their work, or 347,425,920 men. In countries like China nearly all the work of transportation is actually done by man power, and no further explanation of the difference between America and Asia is required. By the use of steam we are evoking aid from the stored up heat in our coal beds equivalent to the population of the whole earth, while the Chinaman lets his coal lie underground, packs his load on his back, and does his manufacturing largely by hand.

Our railways carry our products 1,000 miles to our seaboard for less than foreign railways carry them two hundred miles inland from their seaboard; and, as a whole, our rates in this country are only about one-half those of other countries, while in safety, speed and comfort we are immeasurably superior; and yet in legislative halls and in the jury-box we find a considerable element of hostility to our railroad interests. They are looked upon by some as the original trusts, but they have done more to develop the United States than any other single agency, and the great need of large sections of country is more railroads. This is illustrated by the following table showing the density of railroads in different localities.

State.	Number of Miles of Line per 100 Square Miles of Territory.
New Jersey.....	30.01
Massachusetts.....	26.43
Pennsylvania.....	22.03
Ohio.....	21.43
Illinois.....	19.38
Iowa.....	15.35
Kansas.....	10.76
Nebraska.....	7.29
Virginia.....	9.16
South Carolina.....	8.91
Georgia.....	9.30
Mississippi.....	5.79
Louisiana.....	5.51
Texas.....	3.68
California.....	3.51
Montana.....	2.01
Oregon.....	1.69

Will railroads be built as fast as is desirable if in sections where they have been constructed they are treated as if they were public enemies to be constantly legislated against, their rates reduced by law and their taxes increased? A tax of ten per cent upon the net earnings of a mercantile house would be deemed exorbitant, yet on one great railroad system with which I am famil-

iar, its taxes amount to eighteen per cent of its net revenue. Railroads pay a larger percentage of their earnings for taxes and labor than any other business in existence.

In the mining regions when a trader grubstakes a miner and he finds a good strike does the miner crawlfish on a fair divide? I have yet to hear of such a case; but when a man of unusual energy and enterprise conceives a railroad, gathers a hundred or a thousand partners as stockholders, builds it and charges five cents a mile for carrying a passenger with comfort where it had previously cost ten cents by stage with discomfort, or two cents per mile per ton of freight, where it had cost ten cents by wagon—and the railroad is there and can't be moved—some public spirited citizen (generally a candidate for office), suggests that the great monopoly is charging too much and that charges should be reduced one half. I do not say that railroads or other aggregations of capital known as "trusts" are without sin or that they should not be regulated and controlled if they do what is unreasonable, but I do say when capital has grubstaked labor or has created values without any labor on the part of the public, as is often the case, it is entitled to equitably share in the profits.

But few commodities have declined in price as much as transportation. This is illustrated by the following table showing the average receipts per ton per mile on leading railroads for the years 1870, 1880, 1890 and 1898 inclusively.

Railway Lines.	1870	1880	1890	1898
Lines East of Chicago.....	1.61	.87	.63	.55
West and Northwest Lines.....	2.61	1.44	1.00	.94
Southwestern Lines.....	2.95	1.65	1.11	.94
Southern Lines.....	2.39	1.10	.80	.62
Transcontinental lines.....	4.50	2.21	1.50	.99
Average.....	1.99	1.17	.91	.72

This result has been attained largely through combinations and consolidations, which contrary to the impressions generally entertained, have not resulted in abolishing competition, but have resulted in economies of operation and improvement in service, accompanied with a steady reduction in rates.

Passenger rates have not declined as largely as freight rates, but there has been a material decline in the period covered by the above statistics, while the quality of the service has been greatly improved, with a corresponding increase in its cost to the railway.

The railroad of twenty years ago, with its equipment, would not be tolerated today. How many of us appreciate the privilege of stepping into a parlor on wheels and being hurled through space at the rate of forty miles an hour, with as much safety as if we sat in our drawing-rooms or were sleeping in our beds at home?

At every hour of the day and night the iron horse is speeding over this great