MODEL HOME RULE

Striking Lessons in Municipal Government Furnished by London.

EMINENT CITIZENS IN MINOR OFFICES

Time and Abilities Cheerfully Given to the Solution of Local Problems.

PICAYUNE WARD HEELERS UNKNOWN

Nor Does the Breath of Scandal Taint Official Proceedings.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL IN SESSION

A Remarkable Body of Reputable Men Guarding the Public Interests—Dinners and Discussions—The Advanced Woman on the Stage.

LONDON, Dec. 22.—(Special Correspondence.)—"Why are you a member of the London county council? There is the long session once a week, and then the committee work five days out of the seven must make great inroads on your time."

"Do you want to know the real reason?"

"I do."

"Well, I will tell you, but you must not be offended."

"Over half a century ago my father spent three years in the United States. On his return he declared that the greatest evil he met with there was the indifference of men of education and fortune displayed in public affairs and their unwillingness to hold local and other offices. He contended that unless a change took place in this respect the republic itself was in danger and free institutions must collapse. Being an Englishman, and a radical one at that, he stuck to his theory through life, and as one of his boys I had this idea dinned into me all my life. Almost the last words my father spoke to me before his death were to the effect that my brother and myself would be left fairly well off and that he expected we should never shirk our duty toward the state. Of course I regard it a very high honor to be a member of the London county council, greater than to be in Parliament, but I have always taken a personal interest in local affairs in far humbler capacities and always shall."

Thus spoke Dr. G. B. Longstaff, F. R. C. P., and author of one of the most valuable of modern works on "Studies in Statistics."

This conversation took place on the visitors' platform of the London county council, where I had been listening to the discussion of matters appertaining to the municipal government of 5,000,000 people.

Hardly had Dr. Longstaff uttered these words when J. Fletcher Moulton, Q. C. M. P., came up, and, shaking hands, asked me what I was doing there.

Responding, Yankee fashion, I said: "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, I am an alderman, you know."

I had met Mr. Moulton, who is a political economist of note and a jurist of reputation, a few evenings previous as the leader in the debate at the Political Economy club. These are only two instances that came under immediate notice, but they serve as striking illustrations of why England is far ahead of the United States in the government of cities. Then these gentlemen both proceeded to point out some of the persons who make up the most strictly democratic body of legislators in the world—the London county council. The body of which John Burns, the labor leader, said: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the temple of the London county council than dwell in the tents of Parliamentary procrastination in the Imperial House of Commons at Westminster."

Here Earl Rosebery, prime minister of England, comes and sits side by side with Ben Tillett and John Burns. The primis peer of England, Howard, duke of Norfolk, is a member of the county council, and is proud to take part in municipal legislation. Well known statesmen, cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, political economists like Lord Farrar, president of the Royal Statistical society, and the gentlemen already mentioned; men of high social position, such as Lord Carrington, the earl of Ilchester, Mr. Probyn and Hon. Mr. Ponsonby; men of science, like Sir John Lubbock. At Spring Gardens may be found giants in almost every branch of human attainments! Eminent jurists, men famous in medicine, in letters, in war, in finance, and as leaders of the people, proud to put after their names "L. C. C."

THE WAY THEY WORK.

They assemble every Tuesday afternoon, to say nothing of innumerable committee meetings five days in the week, in the most matter of fact way putting their best thought and much of their valuable time into the questions of the water and gas supply of London, the paving of streets, the management of traffic, the improvement of tramways, workmen's dwellings, lodging houses, sanitation, industrial schools, theaters and music halls, parks, protection against fire, bridges and all other questions which enter into local government. These questions, when discussed with the earnestness and absolute freedom from all personal interest we find here, bring these men into much closer relations than national legislation. Dukes and earls and lords may be found fighting side by side with the humblest labor leaders for the same measure of municipal reform. The council, to be sure, has a liberal majority, but it is by no means always divided on party lines. There is, I believe, one common ground on which all these men meet, namely, that of absolute honesty of purpose. Mistaken, some of them may be as to the wisdom of this or the other policy, but rich or poor the breath of suspicion of a job or the taint of action for self-interest has never clouded the atmosphere of the London county council chambers, and never will so long as the present personnel is maintained.

Everything is conducted with the largest possible degree of publicity. All reports from committees are printed in full in advance of the regular meetings of the council and laid before each member of the council and the representatives of the press. The day I attended the council was discussing the report of the committee commending the purchase by the county of London of the eight great water companies, involving something like $150,000,000. The question was being threshed out in all its phases by good debaters; some for, and others opposed to the scheme. I was struck with the absence of even a hint at the possibility of either politics or self interest entering into this enormous transaction. To refer to the possibility of a job or deal would have been equivalent to throwing a bomb shell into the orderly and sedate gathering at Spring Gardens. And yet, as I have shown in a previous letter, there are members of this council, and of the very committee, dealing with these matters, whose weekly income ranges from $15 to $25, and who are contented to represent the labor interests of the county, both at Spring Gardens and Westminster, for this sum. Of course there is no salary attached to the office of London county councillor. All must undertake it as a public duty. Those Americans interested in good government who happen to have a friend in the London county council should, when in London, drop in, observe the methods, and if invited, be sure and partake of a bit of thin bread and butter, a slice of seed cake and a cup of tea. At the table you may rub up against the duke of Norfolk, or a man who has worked at the bench; you may drop down in a chair next an eminent man of science or an organizer of workmen's clubs. You may touch elbows with some of the greatest swells in the kingdom, with men accustomed to court life, or you may do the honors of the table with men who black their own boots. Of one thing you may feel assured—though there is much earnest talking, there are no jobs afloat. It may also be worth while to mention that unless some good friend points them out, you will not be likely to know whether you had been honored by honest labor or titled aristocracy for neighbors. Try it once.

A FASCINATING STUDY.

Had I the time and the space there could be no more fascinating study just now than that of municipal government in England, and of the men who administer local affairs. Not the dry details of water and gas and street budgets, but of the human side of the problem. Even these few observations may be of value at a time when the greatest problem before the American people is the complicated question of municipal government. To my mind there is but one solution. Men of education, of wealth, of affairs and of high character, especially the latter, must take hold of these matters with earnestness and vigor. Corruption in local government poisons the whole body politic. The source of all power must be clean or all is more or less polluted. The spasm of virtue that in New York has overthrown the most corrupt gang that ever fastened its fangs upon the throat of a free government must be followed by constructive work of the highest order or the vantage ground will be lost and we shall again find our metropolis in shallows and in miseries.

The father of Dr. Longstaff referred to in the opening passages of this letter was a friend of Henry Clay, and of many of our old-time statesmen and heroes. It is now over half a century since the words chronicled above were spoken. Do they not come home to American citizens today? And especially will they not sting and burn some of those men of affairs who have been offering Mayor-elect Strong of New York advice about who should be appointed to this office and who should be chosen to administer this department, but who fled in horror when he said: "Why, you are the men I have picked out for these particular trusts." If honest government is worth having it is worth making some personal sacrifice to maintain. If New York is to be crystallized and made into one greater municipality the personnel of the council or board who administer a trust which would then hardly be second to that of the county of London must be composed of men as high in character and disinterested in aim as the body herein mentioned. Otherwise the second failure will be greater and more far-reaching in its injury to popular government than the first.

DINNERS AND DISCUSSIONS.

Metaphorically speaking, if you want to get down to the bone of any question of economics and scrape it attend the monthly dinner of the Political Economy club—that is, providing, of course, you are fortunate enough to get an invitation. It was over twelve years ago when I first attended a meeting of this club at the Inns of Courts hotel and the personality of the club has undergone considerable change since then, though its ability has not been impaired. This is one of the most famous clubs in the world. There are only thirty-five members and about a dozen honorary members. Four of these members represent, respectively, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and the University of London, and consists of Profs. Edgeworth, Marshall, Nicholson and Foxwell. The other honorary members become so under a rule that members of the club becoming cabinet ministers, thereupon are taken off the regular roll of membership and become honorary members. Villiers, Gladstone, Goschen, earl of Kimberly, and Childers all became honorary members before 1882, but since my former visit Shaw Lefevre, Mundella and Balfour, then regular members, have been promoted.

Of the old members of the club I still find Charles Morrison, elected 1858, Lord Thring, Sir Edward Watkin, Lord Farrar, Sir John Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Leonard Courtney, William Fowler, Lord Welby, Henry R. Grenfell of the Bank of England, Robert Giffen, John Macdonell of the Times, Lord Fitzmaurice, Lord Brassey and one or two others. Seventeen out of the thirty-five members of twelve years ago representing the new blood and brain of British economic thought have been elected since then to fill vacancies caused by death and promotion. Among the new members may be found the names of Prof. Foxwell, Henry Sedgwick, Charles Booth, Prof. Marshall, Herbert Gibbs, J. B. Martin, Monro Ferguson, Fraser Rae and others.

Questions which British statesmen would not care to discuss publicly are often discussed from every point of view at these dinners. In some cases no two members of the club agree. Unanimity of disagreement only makes the debate more interesting and the summing up by the gentleman who leads more picturesque. No matter how important the rule of the club is that no debate shall ever be reported and no notes are ever taken. Another rule is that to be a member of the Political Economy club you must reverse the general order of things and do your thinking in your chair and not on your feet. While permissible, dress suits are not as a rule worn. If a statesman wishes to free his mind and to say what he really thinks on a given question this unique monthly dinner in the Inns of Courts affords safe vent for surplus steam. It will never be reported and individual views expressed within the portals of this hospitable club will never be brought up to confront or embarrass a statesman steering cautiously amid the rocks of practical legislation.

WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS.

Here are some of the questions discussed:

On what economic grounds can the demand for a "living wage" be defended?

Is the English system of poor relief based upon sound economic principles?

Is there any justification on economic grounds for legislative interference with the free migration of labor into this country?

What is the effect of credit on prices?

Have the bases of political economy been affected, and if so, to what extent, by the modern development of combination and co-operation?

In England if you want to know the questions statesmen are preparing to grapple with watch the discussions of the Political Economy club. Glance over the questions on the meeting paper and note the names of the proposers. It is a sure index. To those interested in public affairs there is nothing so interesting as the courtly and informal debate of these intellectual giants on topics of current interest.

The question up the other night when I had the good fortune to attend was as follows:

To what extent is the policy of the merchandise marks act economically defensible or its working economically advantageous?

Mr. J. Fletcher Moulton opened the question. The sum and substance of the discussion as it appeared to me was that this so-called "merchandise marks act" was in fact passed in obedience to a growing feeling on the part of a considerable number of people in England that obstacles should be put in the way of absolutely free foreign importations. Before its passage the cheapest and nastiest goods made in all parts of Europe were admitted with the names of some of the best known British firms blown into the bottle, as it were. If the firm did not object, or perhaps I should say if the firm was in collusion, this public swindle was allowed. Many of the goods may have been exported again and sold as British goods in our own country. Those who urged that the merchandise marks act was purely an act to protect the British public from fraud and had no economic significance (protection significance) were met with the unanswerable question why should it not be extended to the United Kingdom and compel every one who mark their goods to tell the truth about their origin and manufacture. Those who saw in this legislation a distrust of the free trade theory when applied to its fullest extent undoubtedly came out ahead. At least I thought they did.

THE WOMAN CRAZE.

When will this woman craze end? Those who do not want to enter into some phase or other of the woman question must soon stop going to the theater. Here is the bill of fare we must choose from this side of the Atlantic: "The Old Girl," "Rebellious Susan," "The Wrong Girl," "Charley's Aunt," The Shop Girl," "The Other Girl," "The Lady Slavey," "The New Woman," "The Wife of Dives," "The Same Girl," "That Lively Female," "The Fat Lady."

Unless Mr. Irving soon comes to the rescue or the Christmas pantomimes clear the boards of this unutterable trash legitimate drama will for the moment have totally disappeared. It is true we have the "New Boy," and the other night I went to see Beerbohm Tree and Mrs. Campbell in the much-discussed "John-o-Dreams." Unlike most of this class of plays, "all is well" at the close. Nevertheless there has been a great outcry here about it and plays of like character. All sides have aired their several notions in the columns of the London Times, the disgusted "British Matron," the "Society Woman," the "innocent maid" from the suburban districts, the "up to date girl." Mr. Tree himself and several dramatic critics of more or less note. The whole was terminated by a ponderous and wordy leader in the Times, of which the following may be said to be the wise conclusions: "The modern society play cannot be reckoned as an indication of healthy feeling among the play-going public. It is not to be complained of because it recognizes evils which we all know to exist in the world, but because it selects these evils for exclusive contemplation, gives them a prominence which they do not possess in actual life, and necessarily leaves out of account all that makes life sweet and cleanly in their despite. In proportion as they give a distorted view of things, these plays are bad art, and they are doubly bad because they exaggerate the evil and show a depraved preference for dwelling upon depravity."

One writer to the Times bursts into verse, concluding:

In olden days the melodramas bristled thick with crime,
With murder, drink and forgery, and people doing time,
But the history of ladies who go morally astray
Is the motive of the elevating drama of today.

There let it rest. A little more of the old-fashioned drama would, in my opinion, be acceptable. Henry Irving stands alone unmoved by this insane desire to make everything "up to date." The reviews and high class magazines often suffer in quality on this account. For the moment in England both current literature and the drama need a thorough course of disinfecting. Of the former it may be said:

The new books, the new books, the great neurotic school!
That never let the furies sleep, the fervid passions cool,
Be real! they cry, and lust and strife thick crowd the horrid stage;
And every loathsome ill of life is "copy" to their page.

Why not return to:

The old books, the old books, the mother loves them best;
They leave no bitter taste behind to haunt the youthful breast;
They bid us hope, they bid us fill our hearts with visions fair;
They do not paralyze the will with problems of despair.

And so with the old plays.

LOCAL TRANSIT.

Thomas Lowery of Minneapolis, who was here the other day, tells me that the jog trot omnibus transit of London is the most expensive system of street travel in the world. He is undoubtedly right. Some of the fares charged, to be sure, are as low as 1 penny (2 cents), but they run up to 5 pence, or 10 cents, when you travel any distance. As a rule, in London, when you are in a hurry you walk. When I have leisure I like to take an omnibus, and, perched on the top, enjoy a talk with the drivers, who are often rare characters of the true cockney type. Mr. Lowery said he could soon clear some of these streets if they would consent to it and give a much more satisfactory system of conveyance. Nevertheless the London omnibus is a British institution, which, like the sacred House of Lords, cannot be abolished by a resolution. As things go here they pay their drivers very well, but none too well. Any green fellow cannot drive a London omnibus. For a long day's work of sixteen hours they are paid 8 shillings—about $2 per day. By never taking a holiday some of the drivers do very well—better than New York drivers. The average pay is about $1.50 to $1.65 per day. The system is wrong here, because, unlike our street railways at home, the principle is to make people pay a higher fare the further they live from town, thus defeating the fundamental idea of giving poorer people a chance to live in the country, where rents are low. The notion of carrying a man ten or eleven miles for 5 cents has not entered the British mind.

The rage for cycling seems to have taken hold here with increasing fury. A marvelous exhibition of the latest novelties in this direction was given at the Crystal palace last week and I wish I had space to describe it. Mr. Hurst has caught the latest fad in that direction, on the wheel as it were. What the next development in woman's attire will be I should hardly care to prophesy. ROBERT P. PORTER.

RELIGIOUS.

New York City has 522 churches of all denominations. These afford a seating capacity for 400,000.

The churches of the town of Enid, Okl., have no bells, and so the town fire bell is rung to remind the worshipers of the services.

Rev. Dr. Hooker, vice rector of the American college at Rome, has been appointed secretary to Mgr. Satolli, to succeed Dr. Hector Papi. Dr. Rooker is the son of Myron H. Rooker, editor of the Press and Knickerbocker of Albany, where Dr. Rooker was born thirty-three years ago.

The American Bible society has obtained at the sale of the Livermore Biblical library in Boston a number of rare old bibles, including a copy of Cranmer's bible, printed in London in 1562, and a copy of Wycliffe's translation of the New Testament, printed in 1731. It is one of a limited edition of 160 volumes.

Evangelist Moody is doing a great work at Lowell, Mass. He has been obliged to close the door of his tabernacle against all Christians in order to admit the crowds of sinners that come to hear him preach. Mr. Moody takes the very novel view for these days that his mission is not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Mrs. S. G. Shea has been appointed assistant pastor of the South Congregational church of Bridgeport, Conn. She resigned the secretaryship of the Bridgeport Young Women's Christain association to take the new place. She is said to be more effective in saving sinners than the male pastor.

The Evangelical association has a membership of 133,313, and 2,310 churches and halls, worth $4,785,680.

By the new treaty between the United States and Japan entire religious freedom and protection is guaranteed to missionaries, and every part of the country is opened to Americans for travel or for business.

The First Parish, in Dorchester, Mass., over which Rev. Eugene R. Shippen was recently installed as pastor, is the oldest church or religious society in Boston. It is Unitarian, although in one usually well informed religious weekly it is set down as Congregational. It is more than 250 years old and has had only eleven pastors in its history.

Rev. Solomon Cesar Malan, who died recently at Bournemouth, England, was one of the greatest linguists of the age. In addition to French, German, Latin, Spanish, Italian and Greek, he was master of Hebrew, Sanscrit, Chinese, Armenian, Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Japanese, and many other languages. In the Bodleian library at Oxford is a volume containing a psalm written by him in more than eighty languages.

Rev. Dr. Leander has presented to Holy Trinity church in Philadelphia the sum of $15,000 with which to purchase a summer home for those connected with the parish who are unable financially to pay for an outing. As the new property will be able to accommodate fifty persons at a time the church hopes to increase its work and send there next year at least 400 persons. The plan of work is to send married women and children and shop girls principally on these outing trips.

The famous "Soldier's Pocket Bible" of the army of Cromwell, of which a copy was sold in Boston last month for $1,000, is about to be reprinted, with an introduction by Lord Wolseley.

Preachers and people in parts of the northwestern states are at outs, and one side or other must give way before matters are smoothed out. Hop raising is one of the principal industries of the districts affected, and several of the religious bodies have lately condemned in conference the raising of hops, barley and other cereals for brewing or distilling purposes as "an alliance with the saloon and Satan in his work of ruin and damnation," and they have declared that no Christian should be connected with the business. It would mean agricultural revolution, and probably financial ruin to the hop and barley districts for the farmers to become good Christians, according to the standard of the Baptists and other evangelical bodies.

Mr. J. K. Fowler, secretary and treasurer of the Corinne Mill, Canal and Stock company, of Corinne, Utah, in speaking of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, says: "I consider it the best in the market. I have used many kinds, but find Chamberlain's most prompt and effectual in giving relief, and now keep no other in my home." When troubled with a cold or cough give this remedy a trial, and we assure you that you will be more than pleased with the result.

It is stated that Mr. Thomas A. Edison has already expended nearly $1,000,000 in his experiments to find a commercial method of reducing low grade ores by electricity. Should he finally succeed, he says it will be his greatest electrical invention.

Cook's Imperial. World's fair "highest award, excellent champagne; good effervescence, agreeable bouquet, delicious flavor."

THEY PAINT THE EMPIRE RED

Observance of the National New Year Holiday in China.

BIRTHDAY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE

Remarkable Features of the Day They Celebrate—Hardships of Winter—Mammoth Coal Fields — Wasting Sympathy on the Japs.

(Copyrighted, 1894, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

The Chinese will celebrate New Year day this year with quite as much enthusiasm as they ever have in the past, notwithstanding their terrible punishment by the Japanese troops. The majority of the Chinese people, in fact, hardly know that a war has been going on, and nothing could make them give up their New Year celebration. It occurs later than ours and comes on the edge of the spring. It is, however, the great festival of the year and it is a sort of Fourth of July, Christmas, birthday and Sunday mixed up together. It is the birthday of the whole Chinese people. Every man, woman and child in the empire is a year older on New Year day, and all trot about and wish each other "many happy returns." It is the only Sunday that the Chinese have throughout the year. The working people labor from ten to twelve hours every day and they put in thirty solid days every month. At New Year all lay off for a rest, and for about two weeks they do nothing but call, eat and amuse themselves. For ten days before the New Year the country goes wild in preparation. The stores all have low prices and new goods, and the bargain counters are thronged quite as much as they are in America. Every one buys presents and all who can get a new suit for the occasion. Those who can't buy, borrow or rent, and the Chinese on New Year dress in satins, furs and silks. It is about the only day in the year when the whole Chinese people are comparatively clean. Every person is supposed to take a bath the day before, and this for the majority of the people is the only time they get bathed during the year.

A NATIONAL PAY DAY.

New Year is the national pay day. All accounts must be squared up at that time, and the man who can't raise enough to pay his debts has to go into bankruptcy. The laws are such that the creditor can enter the debtor's house and take what he pleases if there is no settlement, and families club together and make all sorts of compromises to keep up the business reputation of the clan. I was in China just after New Year this year and I found lots of bankrupts. It is a great day for the pawnbrokers, and their shops are crowded with people who want to pay their debts and redeem their best clothes, in order to get them out of pawn before New Year. There are crowds who want to pawn other things in order to get money to pay their debts, and the Chinese probably patronize the pawn shops at this time of the year more than any other people in the world. Pawnbrokers receive very high rates of interest and they are protected by the government. Speaking of bankrupts, they are not permitted to begin business again until some settlement is made, and when I wanted to buy some pictures in Shanghai I was told that the artist who kept them was a bankrupt and that he could not open until he got more money.

AN EMPIRE PAINTED RED.

The Chinese paint their whole country red, figuratively speaking, on New Year, in more senses of the word than one. Red is the color with them which denotes good luck and prosperity, and all the New Year cards and invitations are on paper of this color. Every child gets its New Year's present wrapped in red paper, and red inscriptions are pasted over the doors of the houses. These inscriptions bear characters praying for good fortune, wealth and happiness, and they are posted on each side of the outer doors of the houses. New pictures of Chinese generals are put on the front doors, and the houses are scoured and made clean. Among other things, eggs are dyed red, and are offered to the gods, and dinner parties are gotten up in bright vermillion. The red used is that which you find around our firecrackers, and the Chinese spend more in firecrackers on New Year than we do on the Fourth of July. The night before every one is firing off packs of crackers, and there are all sorts of fireworks, including birds and fishes, and scenes of all kinds in fire. The firecrackers are used to scare off the evil spirits, and hardly any one goes to bed the last night of the old year. The Chinese say that the man who sits up the last night of the old and sees the first sunrise of the New Year for ten years in succession wil certainly have a long life, and there are all sorts of New Year superstitions.

HOW THE BOYS TAKE IT.

The children of China all expect to get something on New Year, and they generally receive presents of money in the shape of copper cash, wrapped in red paper. On the last night of the year they run through the streets, shouting out good resolutions for the next. One says, "I want to sell my laziness," and another says, "I am ready to sell my folly, in order that I may be wiser next year." They go out with their fathers to make New Year calls, and, where families can afford it they give their children new clothes in honor of the occasion. They carry lanterns through the streets, and they have balloon-like fishes of paper, which are tied to sticks over their houses in honor of the occasion. All men who have had children during the year buy lanterns and hang them up in sign of rejoicing over their good luck. There are games of all sorts, and many of the boys come out with new kites. There is dancing in the streets, and there are jugglers and dime museum shows and all sorts of theatrical entertainments. The people have festivals and there are family reunions. The rivers are covered with oiled paper, which is set on fire, and the harbors become flaming masses. Everywhere there are shrines, with burning joss sticks before them, and the people fairly go wild.

CHINESE NEW YEAR CALLS.

All people receive visitors on New Year day, and the relatives who call are taken into the ancestral hall, and they worship the ancestors of the family. After this the young people go in and pay homage to their parents and elder brothers, and then go to their schoolmasters and teachers. The emperor has a New Year reception in Peking, and it may be that the foreigners will be received this year, although they have not been in the past. The emperor sits on the dragon throne, and the princes and all the officers go in and get down on their knees and bump their heads on the ground before him. The day after New Year the officials all go to the temples to worship, and for about ten days afterward there are all sorts of New Year ceremonies. The second day is called ladies' day, and if the weather is good the women go out into the country to picnics. They dress in the brightest of silks, their faces are painted in honor of the occasion and their little feet are in costly shoes. They wear a great many clothes, and it is wadded cotton and not coal and wood that keeps China warm.

WINTER IN CHINA.

The winter is now at its worst in the Chinese empire, and the whole northern country is frozen up solid. This means a great deal more there than it does here. The rivers, which form the only means of travel outside of dirt roads, are frozen up, and Peking, the capital, is shut off from the rest of the world for four months of the year. It is reached by the winding Peiho river, which flows into the Yellow sea near the Taku forts. Tien-Tsin is fifty miles inland, and this is a city of 1,000,000 people. Peking is about eighty miles north of it, and the only conveyances are rude Chinese carts. Letters which go to Peking in the winter have to travel overland several hundred miles after they reach China, and they first go to Shanghai, and are carried by pony express.

A NATION IN SHEEPSKIN.

Nearly all the northern Chinese dress in sheepskin during the winter, and coats of this kind and jackets and pantaloons of quilted cotton make up their clothes. The colder it gets the more garments they put on, and a girl, who, in the winter, looks like the fat woman of the circus, may slowly fade into the ethereal type of the living skeleton as she sheds jacket after jacket, when the warm weather approaches. Clothes of this kind cannot be washed, and those of the poorer classes are dirty in the extreme. The richer people wear magnificent garments of wadded silk lined with fur, and I saw one man's wardrobe which contained at least $1,000 worth of costly fur garments. The furs used are of all kinds, and you can get magnificent cloaks of Thibetan goat, such as our ladies use for opera cloaks, for about $10 in gold. They have fine sables, but they are costly, and a number of Li Hung Chang's nobles had silk gowns lined with mink. The fur markets of China are as fine as any in the world. There are long streets in Tien-Tsin which are filled with fur stores, and there is a square in Peking which is devoted to a fur market. Every morning about 4 o'clock you may find there several hundred wholesale fur dealers with their goods spread out on the ground, and you can buy all sorts of skins, from the cheapest of squirrels to the finest of seals. There are lots of second-hand fur stores, and old furs are bought and cleaned and resold.

CHINESE FUEL.

The Chinese do not use fire to keep warm and it is only in the rarest of instances that you will find well heated houses. Fuel is remarkably scarce and everything is carefully saved. I saw hundreds of women pulling up stubble and gathering straw and old weeds in order to make fires, and one of the chief businesses along the Yangste-Kiang is the cutting of the reeds which grow on the low shores and tying them up in bundles to be carried into the cities for sale. I saw no iron stoves in China and the rooms which they pretended to heat were furnished with what are called kangs. These are ledges, or platforms, of brick, about two feet high, which fill one side of the room. They are heated by flues, and a fire of straw is started under them and is kept burning until the bricks are hot. The people sleep on the kang, but the trouble I found with them was that when they were fired up they roasted me, and as soon as the fire went out the kang became as cold as a stone. I slept on them many nights during my interior trip and was continually afflicted with a cold. Had the fuel been wood or coal they might be better, but with straw they were worse than no fires at all. The stoves of China are usually of clay and charcoal is largely used for cooking. There is said to be coal in nearly all parts of the empire, but only a little is mined. All of that brought into Peking is carried on the backs of camels and I saw many coal merchants who sold nothing but coal dust. They mixed the powdered coal with dirt and molded it up into lumps of about the size and shape of a base ball. It was sold by the basket and it brought high prices.

CHINA'S IMMENSE COAL MINES.

Still, China has some of the largest coal fields in the world, and a German geologist who has examined into the matter says that the extent of the workable coal beds of China is greater than that of any other country. There is coal right near Hankow, which is now being used in the making of iron, and every province in the empire is said to have coal in it. There is, however, only one mine which is being operated on anything like scientific principles. This is at Tong Shan, about eighty miles from Tien-Tsin, and the Chinese have been mining about 2,000 tons of coal a day here for years. I visited the works last summer and took a look at the miners. They receive about 63 cents a week, or 9 cents a day, and the mines pay very well. The coal is bituminous, and it was about the only source of supply which China had during the trouble with the Japanese. The railroad runs right through this region, and it was first built to carry this coal to the sea. There is said to be good anthracite coal in the hills near Peking, and when China is covered with railroads coal will be the cheapest of fuel.

HOW THE RICH FREEZE.

I was surprised at the way the richer Chinese suffer from the cold. I almost froze during my talk with Li Hung Chang, and he wore a fur gown during my interview. In some of the Chinese homes which I visited there were little bowls of charcoal in the best rooms, but there were no signs of open fires anywhere, and the Chinese know nothing of the joys of the fireside. Their buildings have many draughts, and the windows and doors seldom fit well. When they get out of order they are allowed to remain so, and nearly all of the old houses are shabby and dilapidated. I took a trip over the great plain from Peking to the mountains of Mongolia on the edge of winter, and I nearly froze to death in the hotels. During this time I passed many of the Mongols riding on the great woolly camels which are common to north China, and which you find, I think, nowhere else in the world. These camels have wool about a foot long, and it hangs down in great fringes from their necks and their bellies. They have two humps, and they are usually of a tan color. The Mongols upon them were all dressed in furs, and both men and women wore pantaloons. Both sexes rode astride, and they were very insolent and rough in their greetings. They are dirty and greasy, and they eat all sorts of fats. They carry great quantities of brick tea from Peking into Mongolia, and they make a tea soup which they strengthen with mutton tallow. Some of them have on robes of sheepskin with the wool of the sheep turned inward, and these fall from their necks to their ankles. They wear shaggy fur caps with earlaps, and they sometimes put their feet into bags of wolfskin or other fur, to keep out the cold.

THE JAPANESE IN CHINA.

A great deal of sympathy is being wasted on the Japanese soldiers who are now in China. Many suppose that they have come from a warm country and that they cannot stand the rigors of a Chinese winter. There was never a greater mistake. Japan is a land of many climates. If I remember correctly the country is about 1,300 miles long from one end of it to the other, and the north is very cold in the winter. You find snow all over central and northern Japan, and Tokio has severe snow storms. The climate of Japan is moist, and a damp cold is much more trying than the dry cold such as you find in China and Corea. The Japanese are used to cold weather, and the daily baths which they take prevent them from taking cold easily. They are well hardened, and I have seen men in Japan trotting about in their bare feet in the snow. They have made good provisions against the climate, and if they carried out the policy which the army had when it entered Corea they probably have their fuel with them. During the first part of the Corean invasion they carried shiploads of wood from Japan for cooking rice. The wood was done up in bundles just large enough for a coolie to carry, and they brought a lot of coolies along to transport the fuel. Corea in winter is much like some of our northern states, save that its cold is dry and the sky is usually clear. The houses are heated by flues which run under the floor, and the people of the Corean capital are, on the average, much more comfortable than those of any Chinese city. They wear more clothes than the Chinese, and a Corean's winter stockings are about two inches thick and they are made of wadded cotton. There are good coal mines near Pinyang, and after the war troubles are thoroughly settled these will probably be developed.

Frank G. Carpenter

COMMON MISTAKES OF HISTORY.

A Smithsonian Professor Pricks Some Holes in Accepted Beliefs.

"What is history but universally accepted fable?" said a learned Smithsonian professor to a writer for the Washington Star. "I quote the great Napoleon. For example, consider Plymouth Rock. In the town of Plymouth is a rock with a fence around it. It is a sort of local fetich. Forefathers' day every year exercises are held there commemorating the alleged fact that on this rock the pilgrims landed. As a matter of fact there is no evidence that such was the fact. Prof. Channing, the historical expert of Harvard, has traced the story back and believes it to have been started by an old man named Faunce, who many years ago pointed out the rock to some children, saying: 'Here they landed.'

"History states that the pilgrims arrived on Sunday, but refrained from landing until Monday lest they should break the Sabbath. That is pure nonsense. As a matter of fact the women and children stayed on the ship all winter because it was more comfortable.

"The gorgeousness and high civilization of the ancient Mexicans at the time of the Spanish conquest have been permanently enbalmed in history. The whole story is a misrepresentation. Cortez naturally wished to give an impression at home that he had conquered a great and rich nation. In reality it was only a half civilized and untutored people. The mode of living was patriarchal, whole families of 100 or more persons living in one house. The communal dwelling was of one story and necessarily of large size. These structures were described by the Spaniards as 'palaces.' The people ate only one cooked meal each day, for the rest of their food depending on a 'grub diet' picked up anyhow. The dinners partaken of by so many individuals are reported in history as 'banquets.'

"The school boy learns that Columbus was the man who first conceived the idea that the world was round. Nothing could be more nonsensical. The truth is that he merely accepted a notion on this subject which had been handed down from classic times by scholarly men. Strabo, the Latin author, was one of these. The conception was for many centuries as a faint light glimmering in darkness.

"Let me call your attention to an instance of the making of fictitious history. There are excellent reasons for believing that the Norsemen reached the shores of North America before Columbus. The records of their sagas, however, gave no notion of the locality where they landed. Only a few such nondescriptive facts are stated as that they found grapes growing. Yet an enthusiast named Horsford, a trustee of Harvard, a few years ago built on the Charles river a tower between Waltham and Newton to commemorate the landing of the Norse voyagers at that point. The sagas tell of going up the river and Horsford chose to assume that the Charles river was the river referred to. Very likely the notion thus recorded by a monument will gain general credit some day, though there is no more reason to suppose that the river was the Charles than that it was the Delaware or the Hudson, or any one of dozens of other rivers.

"I quoted Napoleon a moment ago. You probably know that no battle was ever fought at Waterloo. Waterloo was a post dispatch station some miles distant. Dispatches were sent thence to England, and hence the name given to the battle.

"Sheridan's ride to Winchester was not twenty miles—not over ten miles, I think. There never was any foundation in fact for the story of Barbara Frietchie. The same is true of the yarns about Pocahontas and John Smith."

The popularity of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy and the high esteem in which it is held leads us to believe it to be an article of great worth and merit. We have the pleasure of giving the experience of three prominent citizens of Redondo Beach, Cal., in the use of the remedy. Mr. A. V. Trudell says: "I have always received prompt relief when I used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy." Mr. James Orchard says: "I am satisfied that Chamberlain's Cough Remedy cured my cold." Mr. J. M. Hatcher says: "For three years I have used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy in my family and its results have always been satisfactory.

The first town in Europe to substitute electricity completely for other methods of propulsion upon the tramways is Havre, where the new system of tramcars has lately been inaugurated.

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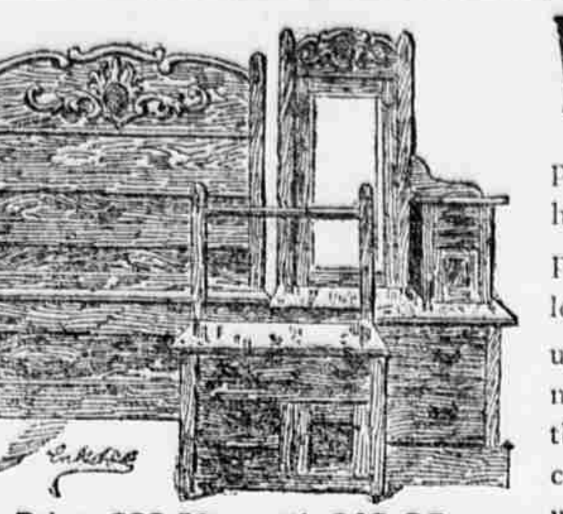

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YORK'S BRIGHT PROSPECTS.

Indications that the Business Depression Did Not Touch that Locality.

YORK, Neb., Dec. 29.—(Special.)—The year of 1894 closes with bright prospects for the city of York for the coming year. Notwithstanding the general hard times York's business has continued to be good, and all of the merchants of the city report a far better trade for 1894 than for 1893. During the year, 1894 there was not a failure of a business house at this place. The banks of the city, instead of suffering a decline, show a good business, and are all in good standing. York has three banks, City National, First National and Nebraska National. It was a noticeable fact that during the year 1893, when the panic swept over the state, how well these banks held up. During that time the old First National, as a result of a run being made on it, was forced to close its doors, but its business was immediately taken up by the York National, which assumed its liabilities. The York National went into voluntary liquidation, and continued business under the charter and name of the First National bank. Not a cent was lost by this bank closing by any one, and it could not be called a failure.

Another special feature of the city is the fine class of dry goods stores located therein. The four principal ones are owned by C. L. Meissner, T. L. Davies, C. C. Cobb and D. J. Colling. About January 1 C. L. Meissner will remove to Illinois. York thereby loses a good citizen and business man, as Mr. Meissner has for a long time been a resident of York county. A good illustration of the business done at this place can be seen in the following: About six years ago T. L. Davies came to this place a poor man, and was to manage the store he now owns. Since that time, by good management, he has built up a good trade, and now owns the store run under the firm name of T. L. Davies & Co. Good business has also been done by both C. C. Cobb and D. J. Colling, and both are prosperous and well known throughout the county.

York has three clothing stores, owned by Woods Bros., Behling & Hawthorne and Hopkins Clothing house. Besides these there are seven hardware and implement houses, five drug stores, three exclusive boot and shoe houses, a canning factory, foundry, fence factory, soap factory, machine works and many other institutions essential to a city of its size.

A United Brethren college is located at this place and is a handsome structure. It has a good enrollment and a well qualified faculty. The Catholics have a fine school here, which is known as Central School of Ursaline Sisterhood. The Mothers' Jewels home is also located here and is a national institution, founded by the Methodist Home Mission society. York boasts of the best system of public schools in the state of Nebraska. They were for a long time under the management of Prof. H. R. Corbett, state superintendent-elect, and his good work while here is still apparent. While the enrollment is about 900, there are over 135 in the High school. The faculty of the High school is now composed of Prof. B. G. Moulton, superintendent; Prof. Shaffer of Nebraska City, principal, and Miss Coy, first assistant.

York has a good class of lawyers, many of whom are known throughout the state. The law firms of the city are as follows: N. V. Harlan, John Purinton, Gilbert Bros., George B. France, Sedgwick & Power, T. E. Bennett, M. Meeker, D. T. Moore, H. Seymore, John Carlin. It has a fine system of water works and the water of the city is claimed to be the finest in the state. A valuable electric light plant is also located here. The business portion of the city is lighted by means of the four large arc lights on top of the court house tower. These lights can be seen for many miles. The court house is one of the finest in the state, built at a cost of $60,000 to the county. The city is well situated and very pleasing in appearence. It has a population of about 4,500. The city has lovely churches and has no saloons. Although small in size, comparatively, it has for a long time been known as one of the best business towns in the state.

QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, Ia., Dec. 27.—To The Editor of The Bee: To decide a bet, please state in next Sunday's Bee how many national legal holidays there are in the United states, made legal by act of congress, or if there is any difference between a national or legal holiday, and oblige. PETE.

There are no national holidays, that is, by order of any act of congress. The different states have set apart certain days as legal holidays.

SOUTH OMAHA, Dec. 27.—To the Editor of The Bee: Would you be kind enough to tell in what year prohibition took effect in Iowa, and oblige. A READER.

The first law was decided unconstitutional, but in 1884 a statutory law was passed which has since been enforced.

OMAHA, Dec. 21.—To the Editor of The Bee: Kindly state in Sunday's Bee the Christian name of General Gordon of Soudan war fame, nicknamed "Khartoum" Gordon, and oblige. A SUBSCRIBER.

Charles George Gordon, better known as "Chinese" Gordon.

OMAHA, Dec. 23.—To the Editor of The Bee: Will you kindly inform me through the columns of The Bee if Herrmann, the magician, is dead, and, if so, when and where did he die. Yours truly, C. A. STEVENS.

Herrmann, the magician, is very much alive, so much so, in fact, that he is to give a performance here at an early day.

Lippert Willing to Go Back.

NEW YORK, Dec. 29.—Wilhelm A. Lippert, wanted in Cape Colony for extensive forgeries committed there in 1889 and 1890, has acknowledged his identity and expressed a willingness to return to the Cape and stand trial.

Oregon Kidney Tea cures all kidney troubles. Trial size, 25 cents. All druggists.