

WEIGHING OF THE MAIIS.

Computation by the Railroads in Order to Obtain Compensation for Transportation.

I obtained from the post office department a statement of the weighing of the mails between Quincy, Ill., and St. Joseph, Mo., over the Burlington route, which runs through the district in which I am specially concerned, said Mr. Lloyd, of Missouri, in the house of representatives recently. I had from that statement—they require mail to be weighed for 60 consecutive days—that there was sent out an aggregate amount of mail from Quincy, starting toward St. Joseph, of \$11,000 pounds. Now, there was put on at West Quincy, which is the first station after leaving Quincy, 1,360 pounds in the 8 days. In order to obtain the compensation, they multiply that \$11,000 pounds by the distance between Quincy and West Quincy, which is two and a half miles. Then they add the 1,360 pounds which was put on at West Quincy. That serves as a basis for computation between West Quincy and the next station, which is Palmyra. Then multiply that sum by the number of miles which intervene between West Quincy and Palmyra. That determines the weight for that distance. At Palmyra there was a very large amount of mail put on and some mail taken off. They find the difference between the two and add that to the amount of mail that was carried between West Quincy and Palmyra. They keep up the process to the end. The same course is pursued on incoming mail. Then they add these several sums together, incoming and outgoing, and divide it by the whole distance, or 206 miles, between Quincy and St. Joseph, Mo.

THE BANQUETS OF NERO.

Were Partaken of Bedding, a Position Singularly Appropriate to the Occasions.

"When Nero dined," said an actor recently, "there were three courses, eaten lying down, and dances went on, or contests of wild beasts, or even fights of gladiators, and the various dishes were brought in to music by slaves who danced as they approached."

"The first course was composed of hors d'oeuvre—eggs, British oysters, lettuce, olives and so on. To begin a meal with eggs still is popular in Italy."

"The second course comprised all the substantial foods. Turbot (a kind of giant flounder), peacock, flamingo, sucking pig, bear, venison and truffles were brought in upon a huge round tray carried by four or five dancing slaves."

"The third course was the dessert—candies, fruits, pastries."

"The guests at Nero's dinners put on dinner dresses of bright colors. They lay on couches on their sides, three to a couch, and they supported the head on the left arm, which, from practice grown muscular, endured the long, hard work of supporting the head without fatigue. They ate with the fingers. The table was at a foot distant from them, and it was necessary when they wanted a fresh handful of food—another lot of flamingo or peacock—for them to roll over on their stomachs in order to reach it."

"The wines were fine, and they were used too freely. In fact, so much wine was consumed at these Neronic banquets that if the guests had not come to dine lying down, they would have ended in that attitude undoubtedly."

Mexico Now Modern.

The modernizer of Mexico is Porfirio Diaz. What a quarter of a century ago was a loosely linked federation he has transformed into one of the strongest and most highly centralized governments in the world. The great power that has been placed in the hands of this remarkable ruler he has wisely used in a paternal spirit for the good of all classes of Mexican citizens. Railways and telegraphs, penetrating every part of the republic; rapid transit, popular education and a strict vigilance exercised over the states have transmuted Mexico. The elimination of the professional politician and the demagogue, and the enlistment of every man of energy and intelligence have assisted in the modernization. Lawyers of eminence, bankers, educators, engineers have been sought out and utilized.

The British Census.

To take the census of the British empire is a matter of difficulty in certain districts. A native official was ordered to take a census of what was known to be a populous village in Uganda. He returned with the report that there was no population, the explanation being that the inhabitants had fled on hearing of his approach. More precise instructions were given to him and he paid another visit to the village. The result of his inquiry was given thus in the tabulated form: Number of huts, 257; inhabitants, men over 15 years of age, 0; men under 15 years of age, 0; women, 0; children, 0; total, 0.

Nothing Surprising.

Mr. Nerve: I suppose you know the object of my call, sir. To be brief, I want to marry your daughter.

Mr. Nerve: Eh? What? I'm surprised that you should think of such a thing. The idea!

"Nonsense! You're prejudiced against the girl! She's all right!"—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

A Question.

Casey—Mangan has been married forty years, but never the chick or child has got.

Cassidy—Thru for ye. I wonder is that hereditary in his family or hers.—Philadelphia Press.

TO POLE BY AIRSHIP.

DASH WILL BE MADE BY NOTED EXPLORER.

Particulars of the Daring Venture in Contemplation—Craft to Be Employed—Prospects of Success.

Mr. Walter Wellman, that notable explorer and journalist who has twice gone to the Arctic region in attempts to reach the north pole, expects to start from Spitzbergen the first of August on a third expedition, which will travel through the air in the largest dirigible balloon ever built. The envelope of the balloon is being constructed by Louis Goddard, of Paris. It is to consist of two layers of rubber-covered cotton and one layer—the inside one—of rubber-covered silk. In its central zone, which is the strongest, the envelope is to have a tensile strength of 2,800 kilogrammes per square meter (about 575 pounds per square foot) thus giving a factor of safety of 6 to 1. The average factor of safety is five to one, as against 3 1/2 to one of the Lebaudy airship. The form of the balloon is to be maintained by an interior ballonette filled with compressed air by means of a five-horse power motor and compressor. On account of the triple rubber layers (which are lapped one inch at the seams and sewed together, and the stitching then covered with cemented strips) the leakage of gas is guaranteed not to exceed 1 1/2 per cent. per day. The amount of fuel and supplies consumed daily will more than counterbalance this. The length of the gas bag will be 50 meters (164 feet); its greatest diameter, 16 meters (54 feet); its surface, 1,960 square meters (21,098 square feet); its capacity, 6,350 cubic meters (224,244 cubic feet); and its lifting power (with gas having a lifting power of 1.130 grammes per cubic meter) 7,240 kilogrammes, or 16,000 pounds. The weight of the balloon is 2,850 pounds, while the framework, steel car, motors, and all other paraphernalia bring this up to a total of 7,500 pounds. This leaves an available lifting power of 8,500 pounds for the crew of five men, three or four motor sledges, a metallic boat, and all supplies, says the Scientific American.

The airship is to have two four-cylinder water-cooled gasoline motors of 55 and 25 horse power. The larger motor drives a forward propeller through reduction gearing, and the smaller one a propeller at the rear in the same manner. A speed of 15 miles an hour will be obtainable with the 55-horse power motor, and 19 miles an hour with both. The total distance to be covered is about 1,200 miles, while the 5,500 pounds of gasoline to be carried should suffice the airship nearly twice this distance. This fuel is sufficient for a 140-hour run of the main motor.

Should one motor break down beyond repair, the travellers can use the other one; and if the airship gives out from any cause, the travellers can take to the sledges. A wireless telegraph outfit is to be taken along, so that communication can be maintained with the base as long as possible.

At a meeting of the New York Motor club on March 23, Mr. Wellman explained fully his plans for the trip, and showed how he has tried to provide for every contingency. The airship is to be transported to Spitzbergen, inflated there, and experimented with during the month of July. If everything works satisfactorily the dash will be made in August and provisions will be carried sufficient for 75 days. Everything has been so carefully planned by Mr. Wellman, who has an intimate knowledge of what is required, that the expedition through the air, if not altogether successful, bids fair to be by no means a dismal failure.

Rush Paper.

Very little paper has been made of late years from rags. Vegetable substances are employed, as alfalfa and straw; the idea has not prevailed that the wild or cultivated rush can be employed for this purpose. But an inventor has ascertained that when suitably treated, the plant will produce a very white and consistent paper pulp by means of the following treatment: One thousand kilogrammes of the green rush, cut up as fine as possible, is mingled with a caustic lye of 30 degrees B., and bottled in an autoclave for five or six hours under a pressure of six kilogrammes at 170 degrees C. The pulp is washed with water, sulphuric acid in suitable quantity added, then bleached with chloride of lime and washed energetically. It is then suitable for employment in the manufacture of paper.—Le Papier.

"Tar" for Sailor.

Why is the word "tar" a synonym for "sailor"? Some dictionaries say that the allusion is to the seaman's tarry hands and clothes—the "savor of tar" of Stephano's song in "The Tempest." Burns uses "tarrybrecks" as equivalent to "sailor." But it is regarded as much more probable that "tar" is short for "tarpaulin," since Clarendon and other writers colloquially use "tarpaulin" to signify a seaman. Of course, this ultimately gets back to tar, a tarpaulin being a tarry "pallin," or covering (the same word as "pall").

Busy Queen.

The queen of the Hellenes probably dispenses more of what may be described as "official kisses" than anyone else on earth. Every lady presented to her with whom she is on intimate terms she kisses on the cheek, others who have not the honor of knowing her well she kisses on the forehead.

MAKE QUEER NEIGHBORS.

By Singular Tide of Events Burial-tracks and Cemeteries Are Brought Together.

How very strange it is that race tracks and cemeteries nearly always go hand in hand. The old Ivy City race course, which became a terrible stench in the nostrils of the national government, was midway between the Harmony cemetery on the northwest and the Mount Olivet cemetery on the southeast. It is now converted into a burying ground, says the New York Press. Famous old Guttenberg ("The gul"), place of a million crimes in racing, is to-day one of the loveliest graveyards beyond the Palisades. To reach the track of the Brooklyn Jockey club at Gravesend you must pass by several cemeteries and I have no doubt the track itself will soon become as good as a burial ground for dead men as for "dead" horses.

To get to Gravesend (think of that name for a race track—the graves, end!) you pass half-way around beautiful Greenwood and split Washington cemetery into three sections. To reach the Sheephead bay course of the Coney Island Jockey club via Thirtieth street ferry you are flanked on one side or the other by such homes of the dead as Calvary cemetery, New Calvary cemetery, Linden Hill cemetery, Lutheran cemetery, Cemetery of the Evergreens, Union Field cemetery, Fresh Pond cemetery, Cemetery of the Holy Cross, Kings county insane asylum, Mount Olivet cemetery, Mount Nebo cemetery, Cypress Hills cemetery, etc. To reach Belmont park you must take all these in and more. It is the same with Aqueduct and Jamaica.

The most celebrated of all southern race tracks was converted into a cemetery not many years ago—the old Metairie track. Nothing like it ever was known in the north, and probably never will be. With that semi-French freedom of conscience, that lack of strict social restraint, the Metairie course was sui generis in its heyday. The infield was reserved for the "lorettes" above the canal and the wall staidhood below it. In the grand stand only the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of the aristocracy were allowed to circulate. But again, with that semi-French freedom, the rich rakes of the upper ten, the swell bachelors, the young men with sweethearts among the select of the crescent city, would think nothing of courting for an hour in the grand stand and then crossing to flirt for another hour with some lovely Thine, Phryne, or Delilah. This was considered quite the proper thing; and Metairie is a cemetery! And Oakland is next door!

MISUNDERSTOOD DRUG LAW

Pharmacy Act Passed in the Transvaal Regarding Poisons in Medicines.

Much misapprehension appears to exist among American patent medicine manufacturers as to a new pharmacy act in the Transvaal, passed at the last session of the colonial council after a heated debate. It does not restrict the sale of any medicine containing poison, though the same must be labeled "Poison," and country storekeepers are not debarred from selling, as hitherto.

Under an act passed a year ago all medicines containing poison must be so labeled, and every chemist has a list of the poisons in his store, so that if the medicine companies doing business in the Transvaal do not publish the formulas with each bottle sold they are subject to prosecution. In truth, the chemist is not permitted to let such medicines leave his store under penalty.

If any of the following poisons are found to be contained in a formula the bottle must be labeled "poison":—Almonds, essential oil (unless deprived of prussic acid), belladonna and its preparations.

The purchaser must be known to the druggist or have one who is known to certify for him; he must also sign his name and address, and the druggist must place his name and place of business upon the label. This law has absolutely rooted out the evil existing at Johannesburg, where Chinamen could heretofore secure whatever amount of opium they desired by merely applying. For, if any can sign their names, and even then, unless known to the chemist, they are unable to buy. However, it has not stopped the smuggling of opium into the compound, and it is stated that the Chinese are still in that manner able to procure the drug.

Making a Dog Understand.

A dog understands "yes," and is equally competent to grasp the "no." Outside of that he is all dog and follows his dog ways. He indulges in no mental refinement and will not comprehend many of your changes of mood or mind. Whatever you undertake to teach, make it plain, simple and unchangeable. It is a pity that he must be taught not to jump up on people and compliment them with his caresses. He means well, but must be disciplined sternly into knowing that it is no good form under any circumstances. The discipline need not be accompanied by any severity. A light touch with a whip, if applied invariably, will soon settle the matter. Some kennel men adopt the plan of stepping lightly on the hind foot, and it is perhaps the clearest way of conveying the idea—Outing.

English Birds in New York.

Several English song birds, including the lark, nightingale and thrush, are thriving in an outdoor flying cage in the New York zoo and make themselves quite at home with American birds.

ASTONISHING LAND VALUES

United States and Canada Rich in Examples of Rapid Rise in Prices.

To those who are skeptical of the wisdom of investing money in real estate there are numerous instances of cities where every inch of land is of great value which have been built upon sites formerly sold for little or even given away. The United States and Canada are rich in such examples. Canada especially has been the scene of great bargains in land. During the first years of its history James I. made a free gift of the whole of Canada, together with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, to the famous Lord Stirling. Some 200 years later a member of the suite of the governor of the colony was granted 100,000 acres of land by William IV. Later this was increased by the addition of 500,000 acres. Sixty years later a Canadian land company was given 3,000,000 acres, 2,000,000 being paid for at the rate of 60 cents an acre, and the rest a free gift. As late as 1880 the Canadian government actually made the Scotch-Canadian company a present of \$2,500,000 in cash, as a bonus, with a free grant of 25,000,000 acres. As there were many conditions as to the development of the territory in the terms of the grant, the bargain was not so one-sided as it at first appears.

Everyone knows that the whole of Manhattan island was sold by the Indians for \$24. Yet a plot of ground which was once a farm, and was granted and still belongs to Trinity church, yields a yearly income of \$10,000,000.

Pennsylvania, the second most populous state in America, containing scores of prosperous cities, has an area of about 45,000 square miles. This tract of land was given over to William Penn in settlement of a comparatively trifling debt which Charles II. owed to Penn's father, and which he found himself disinclined or unable to pay in cash.

The same improvident king was the one who rented 2,700,000 square miles of the land about Hudson Bay for a yearly rental of two beavers and two elk per annum. This has proved to be one of the best speculations in land on record. Some 200 years after the deal the company of owners sold the major part of this vast territory to the Canadian Federation for \$2,500,000, and in the meantime it had been bringing in an average income of \$500,000 a year.

Not more than 270 years ago the present site of Liverpool was sold for \$2,250 by a small London syndicate, who had bought it from Charles I. for less.

The site of Johannesburg and most of its gold mines, which are said to contain over \$14,000,000,000 worth of the precious metal, were sold less than 30 years ago to an Englishman named Pratt for the sum of \$1,500. In spite of its cheapness it was a bad bargain for him, for because of his activity in the first Boer war his property was confiscated and he was driven to England in a penniless state.

FORECASTING BIG FLOODS.

Most Destructive Inundation for Fifty Years Accurately Foretold by Weather Bureau.

Early in 1897 telegrams were posted in a hundred cities along the Mississippi, warning the inhabitants to prepare for tremendous floods. These warnings, says J. E. Watkins, in the Technical World, went so far as to name the exact date, sometimes two or three weeks off—when the coming flood would be at its height, and even stated the number of feet above low-water mark the water would reach. They were signed by the chief of the weather bureau at Washington.

The inhabitants of Cairo, New Orleans and of the towns and cities between read these sensational messages, looked out at the shrunken Father of Waters flowing calmly along within its banks and sniffed contemptuously. They were not going to be scared by a lot of fool scientists in Washington! Only a comparatively few timid people were at all alarmed or even impressed. These went so far as to move their valuable property up onto high ground, and were well laughed at for their pains. Even the newspapers took the matter up, and scolded the government for allowing the weather bureau to frighten needlessly a lot of silly old women.

Finally the date set for the coming of the flood arrived, and with it came the water. The greatest flood for more than half a century swept down the Mississippi and overflowed more than 12,000 square miles of land. The main streets of a hundred towns and cities were under water; and, at some points practically the only property not damaged was that of the ridiculed people who had heeded the despised warning of the weather bureau. And it was estimated that property to the value of \$15,000,000 was saved, which would certainly have been destroyed but for the advance notice which its owners had been wise enough to heed.

Jail-Breaker's Offense.

The charge against a man named Armstrong, who had made his escape while being taken to jail, the other day, was: "That Armstrong got at large withersoever he would, to the great hindrance of justice and the evil example of all others in the like case offending, and against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, his crown and dignity."

Thoroughly Professional.

"Did you say that she is a professional nurse?" "I think so. Anyway she's going to marry him just as soon as he can sit up."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

LEADS IN LOGGING.

GREATEST SOURCE OF TIMBER SUPPLY THE UNITED STATES.

Almost Inexhaustible Resources of This Country in Woods Practically Unlimited in Variety.

Recent official reports show that Uncle Sam is easily the greatest lumber man in the world. The greater part of the timber that is used in making everything from matches to masts is hauled from the shores of the North American continent. While pine and fir form the bulk of the trade, other American woods are much in demand.

Even the tree-clothed islands of far-off Australia depend upon American forests for their supply of commercial timber. It is estimated that half of the spool stock used in the thread manufacturing of England is birch wood that comes from Maine, a state that has been turning out on an average 150,000,000 feet of lumber per annum for the last 50 years. Southern cypress, for many years regarded as fit only to furnish shade for alligators, is now the standard shingle wood of the world.

California redwood, which half a century ago was practically unknown, is today eagerly sought for in all the markets of Christendom. One of the best examples of the demand for certain American woods is found in the prices paid for walnut, which comes chiefly from the middle Atlantic states. German agents have been known to pay from \$250 to \$400 each for fine logs of Pennsylvania walnut.

Notwithstanding the enormous output of timber from the United States, there is enough left to furnish food for the hungry teeth of the great saw-mills for many generations to come. It was estimated by government experts in 1900 that the standing supply of timber in the United States amounted to more than 2,000,000,000,000 feet board measure. With such a supply, together with the scientific methods of forestry that are coming more and more into use, there is little fear that the United States will have to go outside her boundaries to procure lumber. The very magnitude of modern enterprise is a guaranty that measures will be taken to preserve the forests.

A single corporation operating in the state of Maine, has invested nearly \$16,000,000 in mills and machinery, dams and forest land. With such an amount of capital tied up it is evident that the future prosperity of the undertaking depends upon the preservation of its supply of raw material.

The lumber producing territory of the United States may be divided into six geographical sections, each of which is commercially distinct from the other. The lake region, with its white pine and hemlock, includes the states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and parts of Missouri and Illinois.

Practically all of the states south of Mason and Dixon's line, and as far west as the Rocky mountains, comprise the section from which come principally the long and short leaf pines and all the cypresses. Of the various groups that which furnishes the greatest variety of woods includes the New England and north Atlantic states. Their forest products range from the spruce and birch of Maine to the hickory, oak and walnut of the middle states.

Ohio, Indiana and part of Illinois form a district whose contribution to the world's supply of lumber is practically all hardwood. Redwood, Douglas fir, cedar and spruce flourish in almost unlimited quantities in the Pacific states and the Rocky mountain states supply pine, aspen, cottonwood and spruce.

That the American lumber trade has long since passed the days of its infancy and is now one of the foremost industries of the country is plain to every one who glances at the statistics prepared by government experts. With the growth of the industry logging has been transformed from a crude operation performed by hand labor, helped out by oxen and horses, into a business conducted as skillfully and with the same attention to careful organization and detail as are seen in other great enterprises.

In the almost inexhaustible forests of Washington a single company often has hundreds of men on its pay roll and works a score of logging engines on its own railroads, some of which are more than 80 miles in length. Companies of this size are capable of turning out 500,000 feet of logs daily during the entire year.

Unlike other industries which have been rapidly developed from small beginnings, lumbering has not lost all its picturesque features. The red-shirted river drivers still guide the great drives down the rivers, but now massive dams control the flow of the water and the logs float to market with a regularity unknown in the early days. To the old-time picturesque has been added a show of discipline not unlike that belonging to an army.

Chauffeurs of Long Ago.

There were chauffeurs long before automobiles. History tells us that about the year 1798 men strangely accoutered, their faces covered with soot and their eyes carefully disguised, entered by night farms and lonely habitations and admitted all sorts of deprecations. They garroted their victims, dragged them before a great fire, where they burned the sides of their feet and demanded information as to the whereabouts of their money and jewels. Hence they were called "chauffeurs," a name which frightened so much our good grandmothers.

STUDYING WATER POWER.

The French Government is Anxious to Assist Industrial Development.

The French government is pursuing a course which promises to result in great benefit to the manufacturers of that nation, by surveying the rivers and streams of the country in order to determine their capacity for generating power for the service of factories, reports the New York Tribune. Industrial men in the United States have made many serious mistakes in the past by developing water power for factories, only to find that lack of water at certain periods of the year compelled discouraging and costly shutdowns or the installation of reserve steam power plants. France does not propose to have her manufacturers make such mistakes as these in the future, and has begun the work of classifying and controlling her streams. In the United States hydraulic enterprises have been limited to great streams and executed mainly by private enterprise. The United States has never attempted a scientific examination of its resources with a view to enabling towns and villages on streams of minor consequence to put to profit the power now lost. This is what France now proposes to do.

In France the rivers susceptible of being controlled with a view to industrial utilization are numerous. But before erecting hydro-electrical works of importance, it is very important to know the variations in the volume of the stream to be utilized at various seasons of the year. The factors to be investigated are the surface and the direction of the watershed, the mode of culture, the extent of the forests, the geological nature of the soil and subsoil, the intensity and the division of the rains or snows received by the watershed and, in mountainous sections, the surface of glaciers which sustain the summer discharge. A great number of useful facts have already been gathered by the department of agriculture, but it is of the highest interest, in order that they may be properly utilized, to determine the best methods of seeking the elements and to co-ordinate the results obtained. This is a new and important task, which has been confided to a committee for scientific studies.

HER CURIOSITY AROUSED.

Thought the Man Who Was "Et Up" Might Have Been a Disreputable Husband.

It was the mayor of a western city, says the Detroit News, who received the following letter of inquiry from a Boston woman:

"Kind and Respected Sir: I use in a paper that a man named John Sipe was attacked and et up a bare whose cube he was trying to get when the she bare come up and stop him by eating him up in the mountains near your town. What I want to know is, did it kill him or was he only partly et up and is he from this place and all about the bare? I don't know but what he is a distant husband of mine. My first husband was of that name and I supposed he was killed in the war but the name of the man the bare bit off the same I thought it might be him after all, and I thought to know if he wasn't killed either in the war or by the bare for I have been married twice since and there ought to be divorce papers got out by him or me if the bare did not eat him all up. It is him you will know if he has living six toes on the left foot. He also since been an has a spread eagle tattooed on his front chest and a mark on his right arm, which you will know him by if the bare did not eat up these lines of his being him. If alive don't tell him I am married to Joe White, for he never liked Joe. Maybe you'd better let on as if I am dead, but find out all you can about him without his knowing anything what it is for. That is all the bare did not eat him all up. If it did not see you can do anything and you needn't take no trouble. My respects to your family and please answer back."

Novel Arctic Station.

Arctic science should be greatly advanced by the permanent station for its study to be established this year on the south coast of Disco Island. This novel station, to be established by a gift from Mr. A. Holck, of Copenhagen, and to be aided by an annual grant of \$3,000 from the Danish government, will have a well-equipped biological laboratory, with working places for visitors, and will provide a library of arctic literature. The only charge to visiting naturalists will be a small fee for board.

Odd Epitaphs.

At Worcester, England, the slab erected over a departed auctioneer is inscribed with a single word—"Gone." In Sussex the initials and date of the death of the deceased are followed by two words—"He was." The most remarkable inscription is at Can-Hill cemetery, Belfast, where the inscription says: "Left till called for."

Specific Information Needed.

Wigg—Some parts of New York are pretty tough? Wagg—Yes, the last time I was here there was a man shot on the east side. "On the east side? Which way was he going?"—Philadelphia Record.

Not Bad.

When Princess Ena became queen of Spain she is to have \$50,000 per annum, with the washing green out.—Cincinnati Commercial.