

# The World's Progress.

CURRENT TOPICS, NOTES AND COMMENTS ON EVENTS OF THE DAY.—INTERESTING SUBJECTS AND NOTABLE THINGS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED DURING THE PAST MONTH.—CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY FROM A FAMILIAR POINT OF VIEW.

## The New Administration.

The new Administration has plenty of work in prospect and ample opportunity to distinguish itself. The questions of national defense, fortifying the coast, and harbor defenses, the Samoan protocols, and many other questions of foreign policy, the Panama canal, our relations with Canada, the limitations of immigration, and other international interests are urgently awaiting the attention and wise legislation of the new Administration. Other matters assume almost problematical difficulties to be inquired into and adjusted or re-adjusted, such as the relation between the whites and blacks in the South, the closer commercial union and intercourse between the different countries of the American continent, some means of solving the labor question, the relation of tax-paying citizens to the corporations, so that "trusts" and "deals" organized for the purpose of raising the price of the necessities of life will be impossible. No less important and prominent subjects for attention and consideration are the ever-present issues of Prohibition and the regulation of the liquor traffic, the necessity for uniformity in marriage and divorce laws, and a proper guarding of the elective franchise throughout the country to secure at national elections a full ballot and a fair count. To prevent fraud and protect industry, to promote purity and prohibit vice, to proclaim truth and perpetuate our institutions, is the prescribed official duty of all constituting the Executive. The future of our country never looked more promising than now, yet perils threaten every attempt at advancement, and the present Administration has a glorious opportunity to make a glorious record. It is to be hoped anticipation will be vested in realization before the expiration of its allotted term.

## Four New States.

Four new stars have been added to the flag under provisions of an act which has no parallel in the history of Statehood on this continent. Four new States, namely, North and South Dakota, Montana, and Washington, have been admitted into the Union by law and not by proclamation of the President. All the new States will elect Senators and Representatives to Congress in time for next December's session. When the news of the passage of the territorial bill increasing the number of American States to forty-two was received in the Dakota Legislature, the entire body with sudden enthusiasm began singing the Doxology. The seventh standard parallel which divides the Territory of Dakota into two States, is bounded on the north by Richland, Sargent, Dickey, McIntosh and Emmons counties until it reaches the Sioux Indian Reservation, through which it cuts, coming out between Bowman and Ewing counties.

## Oklahoma.

The proposed new territory of this name is the western half of the Indian Territory. The eastern half is occupied by the five civilized tribes, the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws and Chickasaws, comprising the bulk of the Indian population. In the "beautiful land," as the name Oklahoma signifies, there are about thirteen thousand Indians, remnants of seventeen tribes, to whom it is proposed to assign certain lands. The Indians do not view with much favor the creation of this territory, and as an old Choctaw Indian said, they think that "Its chief beauty in white men's eyes consists in the fact that they have no right to it." However, this rich, charming, and productive land, offering every inducement to the explorer and settler, is almost sure to be opened to the white race, and there is no reason why it should not be done in such a way as to confer great benefits upon the Indians, rather than to override their rights. Thousands of persons are waiting for the opportunity to go in and possess this promised land, and it is predicted that within a month after Oklahoma is opened to settlement it will have a population of over one hundred thousand.

## The New Secretaryship.

When President Washington began his first Administration one hundred years ago, his Cabinet consisted of but four members, one-half the present number, recently increased to eight by the creation of another Executive Department, the Department of Agriculture. Since the Department has been created, it will doubtless be enlarged rather than reduced by our progressive government. The influential body known as the President's Cabinet has expanded slowly, and the Departments have not been constituted and set in motion with any degree of

promptness. In fact, the Government at first organized itself very slowly, delaying the inauguration of Washington from March 4 to April 30, 1789, owing to the tardiness of members of Congress in reaching their posts. The first nomination for Washington's Cabinet was that of Alexander Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury, then a small bureau with a few clerks, which, notwithstanding its development, has not yet departed materially from the system devised by the first Secretary's genius. The new Department will possibly be enlarged by transferral of several bureaus from other Departments, and it is very evident that the office will afford its holder an opportunity to wield considerable political influence, since he will be upon the same level as the other seven who advise the President in his councils.

## Tigers in Java.

A good place for an adventurous sportsman at present would be in Java, where it is reported there are so many tigers that portions of the island are being depopulated. The people are either disinclined through superstition, or they lack means or courage to attack and destroy the tigers, although large rewards are offered by the government for the destruction of beasts of prey. In 1888 the reward for killing a royal tiger was raised to 200 florins. However, guns are rare, and since a rising in the province of Bantam, some years ago, have been taken away by the authorities altogether. A plague of tigers is unusual, yet their skins are so valuable that an organized tiger-hunt would seem to be likely to well repay the authorities, or whoever set about exterminating them, in cash as well as security.

## Osman Digna.

The famous African traveler Dr. Schweinfurth, a renowned authority on matters relating to the Soudan, vouches for the fact that Osman Digna, the rebel leader who for the past four years has kept the English at bay around Suakim, is a renegade Frenchman, a native of Rouen. The remarkable skill shown by Osman Digna in the construction of fortifications, gave rise to a suspicion that Osman Digna was but a *nom de guerre* of some European, and this suspicion has become a certitude. Osman Digna's real name is George Nisbet, and he is the son of a widow whose husband, having failed in business in Rouen, went to Egypt and died there, leaving his wife almost penniless. A few months thereafter she married a Mahometan merchant of Alexandria, Osman Digna, who adopted the boy George, converted him, and gave him his own name, and Osman Digna, Jr., eventually inherited his stepfather's fortune and business. The latter was that of principal slave-dealer of the whole Red Sea coast. Arabi Pacha, the rebel leader, was a great friend of this French Osman Digna, who warmly espoused his cause during the insurrection at Cairo, in 1882. At that time he was elected chief by the Sheikhs of the Eastern Soudan.

## The Japanese Parliament.

A new era of progress has been inaugurated in progressive Japan. The Mikado of that beautiful country of islands has proclaimed a Constitution, and a Parliament has been established after the English model. Under the new Constitution, the Empire is proclaimed an hereditary sovereign State. The Mikado is Commander-in-chief of the army and navy, has the right to declare war and to conclude peace, opens and dissolves Parliament, confers titles of nobility, exercises a restricted right of pardon, and sanctions the publication and execution of laws. The legislature consists of a House of Peers, comprising certain of the nobility and senators appointed by the Mikado and elected by the chief tax-payers in each provincial capital; and a Chamber of Deputies, elected every three years by the people. The right of suffrage is exercised by all Japanese men over the age of twenty-five who pay taxes to the amount of \$25. Property rights are declared inviolable, the professions are open to all classes, and freedom of religion, opinion, and public meeting is proclaimed. The Japanese people were formerly divided into eight classes: the *Kuge*, or Kioto nobility; the *daimies*, or Yedo nobility; the *hatamoto*, or lower *daimio* class, including the military *literati*, under the general name of *samurai*; the priests and inferior professionals; the farmers and untitled landholders; artisans, merchants, actors, and beggars. Beneath all these were the *eta*, or tanners, skimmers, and all workers in leather, who were the pariahs of Japan. Now, the feudal system of government has been gradually abolished after frequent outbreaks of civil war, and the Imperial Court, after consulting general opinion, has, through various phases of bureaucracy under an enlightened sovereign, finally given place to a constitutional government. The construction of railways, telegraphs, and public works, and a system of education have accelerated political progress, and democratic ideas, once rooted in the mellow soil of the Far East, are likely to grow rapidly.

## A New Sect.

A new religious sect has appeared in the middle counties of South Carolina, and its apostles have inaugurated a crusade. They call themselves "The True Lights," and profess to believe in three heavens and three bells. Life on earth is either heaven or hell No. 1. Then there are intermediate states, during which souls stay between death and judgment; and, finally, the permanent abode of bliss, and the reverse. The devil, according to their creed, came from space, which was not created, and had no beginning. The object of creation is to benefit God's off-

spring, the souls of men, which were not created, but have always had an embryonic existence in God. This peculiar sect numbers only a few hundred at present.

#### Eclipse Blind.

With the march of modern improvement, new diseases have appeared which were created by the various unfavorable conditions surrounding workmen or those availing themselves of the advancements of science. Such are the "railway spine," the "caisson disease," and various affections engendered by working around the electrical plant. But an eclipse is no new thing, and the sage who so confidently averred that "there is no new thing under the sun" would have been very much surprised to learn of a curious affliction which has befallen a young artist of San Francisco, California. During the total eclipse of the sun on New Year's day, he looked at the eclipse with the naked eye, not having any smoked glass at hand, although his friends with whom he was walking in the fields at the time warned him that he would injure his eyes. However, he viewed the eclipse and thought no more of the matter; but the next morning he was totally blind. It seems that his eye had caught the focus of the sun's rays at exactly the point where the heat was so intense as to scorch some of the nerves in what physicians term the mirror of the eye. The most curious thing about the case is that nothing unusual can be seen in the appearance of the eyes. The phenomenon excites much interest among the medical faculty.

#### Shorthand or Rapid Writing.

Shorthand is by no means, as we are apt to think, a novel discovery, but was known to the ancients. Of Marcus Tullius Tiro, the learned freedman formerly Cicero's slave, we read that he used to transcribe his master's speeches, word by word, and he was not alone in this art, for besides him there were other *curatores* or *notarii*—stenographers we should call them—who also practiced rapid writing. Under Augustus the art became more general, and St. Cyprian (200-258 A.D.) belonged to its most enthusiastic devotees. But Justinian, 565 A.D., saw something sinful in the art of shorthand, and it was proscribed. So it fell into disuse and was forgotten, until modern enterprise revived the old Tachygraphy of the Romans.

#### Diphtheria in Bottles.

Professor Pasteur has discovered the germ, or microbe of the dreaded disease diphtheria,—the terrible destroyer of child life. His assistants have taken pieces of the diseased tissue or membrane from the throat of a victim and inoculated several animals therewith. All the animals died in a few days of a disease displaying the symptoms of diphtheria. Then, by means of a series of glass tubes, the experimenters diluted the morbid tissue to an infinitesimal amount. A germ was taken from the final result and a rabbit inoculated with it, which died as quickly as the first, before the dilution of the virus. The Professor has thus found the deadly germ, but he has not, as yet, discovered an antidote or any prophylactic for the cure or prevention of the disease. This bottling of microbes may yet lead to some desirable result, so far as the prevention of diphtheria is concerned, yet that inoculation should prove to be the only preventive is not to be hoped for. Vaccination for a disease like small-pox is one thing, but inoculation for diphtheria is not likely to be popular.

#### An Incendiary Egg.

A farmer near Manchester, Md., not long since received notice from the barn-burners who are infesting Carroll County that his barn would be burned at a certain time. He removed his crop and machinery and watched for the incendiaries, but only found an egg in some hay in the barn. The egg looked all right, but upon lifting it he was astonished to find it very heavy. It had been blown and filled with explosive chemicals and water, so that when the water, which was trickling out of the shell when the farmer found it, had evaporated, combustion would occur. This incident causes the residents of that part of the country to regard the apparently innocent egg with suspicion until fully satisfied that it is not loaded. What object the ingenious manufacturers of this destructive little explosive hoped to gain by these incendiary fires has not yet been learned; but now that the secret of the Maryland barn-burners' methods has been discovered, they may desist from their destructive work. How it would surprise a motherly hen to see, instead of one of her expected brood, a furious explosion hatch out from such an egg, should she happen to be around when it occurred!

#### Among the Coreans.

The home-life of the Coreans is said to be in most things a poor copy of the Chinese. The dress of the Coreans is the same as that worn by the Chinese before the Manchu conquest, which made the pigtail obligatory as a sign of submission. The only signs of worship seen are wisps of straw and bits of cloth hung in the doorways to delude the devil and keep off evil spirits. A trace of the old dragon-worship exists in their toleration of snakes, and it is impossible to get a Corean servant to kill the snakes that drop from the mud roof and slip out of the crevices in the walls. Until the arrival of the American physicians, the king and queen of Corea had a perfect army of necromancers and wizards in attendance upon them, and these were always consulted in matters of state policy as well. On a certain day in June, the strict seclusion of the women is relaxed, and they may go anywhere with uncovered faces; the homes of foreign residents are then visited by thousands of curious women.

#### Ozokerite.

Several years ago a prospector out in Utah noticed a novel kind of paper-weight made of substance which felt like gutta-percha and had a resinous odor. The stranger asked the proprietor of the place what the singular object was made of. "Chewing gum," said the man. "Plenty of it back here in the hills." The prospector, a learned naturalist, immediately recognized the substance to be ozokerite, or mineral wax, till then supposed to exist only in the province of Galicia in Austria. Quantities of this mineral were discovered in the White River district of Utah, but the processes of mining and refining the valuable product were yet a secret. To discover this an eminent chemist visited the Galicia mines in Europe, and in several months succeeded in obtaining the necessary information. The mining is in most cases by windlasses and buckets, and sometimes by improved machinery; but blasting is dangerous, owing to the large quantities of gas freed under pressure, and therefore is rarely permitted. To enumerate all the uses to which ozokerite may be put is to suggest a possible limit to American ingenuity. It is plastic without being soft, and hard without being brittle. It is a perfect insulator for the electric wires, and valuable for all kinds of water-proofing. Boxes, tubs, barrels and kegs lined with it are perfectly air-tight, and the ozokerite imparts no unpleasant flavor to the contents, even if they are mineral waters. Candles, wax dolls, wedding-cake decorations, etc., are made of ozokerite, and among other uses to which it is put are the making of liniments, salves and plasters, sealing-wax, wax matches, blacking, varnishes, and all kinds of lubricants.

#### Telegraph Plant-Parasites.

One would suppose that a telegraph wire was the last place in the world to look for any sort of plant to grow. Yet that such is the case, is reported in the accounts of a traveler who found in Brazil, not far from Rio Janeiro, that the telegraph wires were overgrown with quantities of mistletoe. At some distance the wires looked as if they were fringes, and he thought they were roots of some vine which had been uprooted by an inundation and left hanging from tree to tree after the waters had subsided. On approaching nearer, he saw that the wires were so high that this hypothesis was impossible; and upon closer investigation he found that the fringe was composed of thousands of tiny mistletoe-plants, which had fastened upon them and grown there. Many varieties of mistletoe grow in Brazil; one especially, called in the native language "bird-plant," is often found upon fruit-trees and other cultivated plants. It bears large berries eagerly sought after by the birds, who are the means of transferring the seeds of the plant to the telegraph wires, where they flourish as well as on the trees. The plants may not live very long, but the birds keep up the supply, and every telegraph-wire has an appendage of mistletoe.

#### A Last Link.

In preparing for the construction of the new suspension bridge across the Hudson River, in the Highlands just above Peekskill, it was necessary to remove the rock to which was fixed the chain General Washington had hung across the river to prevent the British ships sailing up. Samuel Wheeler, the most eminent iron-smith of his time, made the chain in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and it was hauled in links across New Jersey. At that time Mr. Wheeler was serving in the army, but was recommended by General Mifflin to Washington as the man who could make the desired chain, which, when hung, did such good service during the Revolutionary War. When General Washington requested Mr. Wheeler to make it, the latter said he could not do it where he then was. "Then," said General Washington, "I will cheerfully give you dismissal from the army. Badly as we want men, we cannot afford to keep such a man as you." So Mr. Wheeler went home and made the chain, which was ultimately cut by building a fire about a link and then using a chisel and sledge-hammer. The historic rock to which it was fastened will be sent to West Point, or some equally suitable place, and kept in custody as a national relic.

#### The "Death Gulch."

The "Death Valley" of Java it was long believed no traveler could cross, owing to the poisonous exhalations of carbonic-acid gas with which the bottom of the valley is filled. This Pakarman, or poison-hole, is the largest and most dangerous of the gas-springs or *mofettes* of Java, and until last summer was the only place known in the world where gaseous emanations have accumulated and proved fatal to the larger animals. During the past summer (1888), in the Yellowstone National Park, so well-known as the wonderland of America, was discovered a place equaling this famous death valley, and where the gaseous exhalations have proved fatal to numerous bear, elk, and many smaller animals. The place, to which the appropriate name of "Death Gulch" is given, is situated in the extreme northeastern portion of this reservation, a short distance south of the mail route from Lamar River to the mining-camp of Cooke City. The place differs materially, however, from the famous Death Valley of Java and similar places, in being simply a V-shaped trench, not over seventy-five feet deep, cut in the mountain-slope, and not a depression or cave. The well-known *grotto del Cano*, near Naples, is a familiar example of such fatal accumulations of gas. Their visitors are entertained with the spectacle of a dog becoming asphyxiated, while the guide, whose head rises above the gas, is not affected by it. This Death Gulch is, however, most remarkable as a bear-trap, and is one more of the wonders of the Yellowstone Park.