The Sun.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1900.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.

DAILY, per Month	$0 50
DAILY, per Year	6 00
SUNDAY, per Year	2 00
DAILY AND SUNDAY, per Year	8 00
DAILY AND SUNDAY, per Month	70

Postage to foreign countries added.

THE SUN, New York City.

PARIS—Kiosque No. 12, near Grand Hotel, and Kiosque No. 10, Boulevard des Capucines.

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Remember Cheesequake Creek.

The Hon. ERNEST F. ACHESON of Pennsylvania leads the House of Representatives in the alphabetical sense. His name is at the head of the list, and is heard first at every call of the roll. Yet Congressman ACHESON is not a member of very long standing, nor, apparently, of a very long cranium.

This gentleman is a member of the Committee on Rivers and Harbors. He is reported as saying recently:

"We could pass a bill appropriating $100,000,000 for river and harbor improvements. Not only is the sentiment of Congress overwhelmingly in favor of liberal expenditures for improvements of this character, but the people everywhere throughout the United States are in favor of them. I have not the slightest doubt that public opinion would be quick to sustain Congress in the appropriation of $100,000,000 for river and harbor improvements."

If Mr. ACHESON will go to one of the elders of the House—let us say, to his neighbor Gen. BINGHAM, or to Uncle JOE CANNON, whose experience goes away back to the time when there was no such thing as a River and Harbor Committee—he will obtain information which may be the seed of wisdom.

Either of these veterans can take the enthusiastic young River and Harbor committeeman upon his knee, metaphorically speaking, and recite for his instruction the simple story of Cheesequake.

The political almanacs will tell Mr. ACHESON what became of the Republican majority in the Forty-seventh House, which passed a then unprecedentedly large River and Harbor bill of less than $19,000,000, and passed it a second time over the veto of President ARTHUR, who understood public sentiment better than did the ACHESONS of those days.

Times are prosperous now, there is a surplus in the Treasury, the revenues of the Government, like its necessary expenditures, are enormous; but if the Hon. ERNEST F. ACHESON and others like him think that the situation is auspicious for the extensive rolling of logs, they need to study history and also the concluding passage of President MCKINLEY'S last annual message to Congress, as follows:

"In our great prosperity we must guard against the danger it invites of extravagance in Government expenditures and appropriations; and the chosen representatives of the people will, I doubt not, furnish an example in their legislation of that wise economy which in a season of plenty husbands for the future."

The Hon. WILLIAM MCKINLEY, too, was a member of the Republican majority in the Forty-seventh or Cheesequake Congress, and a member of the Republican minority in the Forty-eighth. He is now President of the United States and is naturally disinclined to end his term of office under the surveillance of a politically hostile House.

His head is longer than ACHESON'S.

Surplus-Breeding Kansas.

The report of the Hon. JOHN W. BREIDENTHAL, the very competent Bank Commissioner and lately the Fusion candidate for Governor of Kansas, helps us to understand why he did not reach that post.

Sixty-five Kansas banks have a genius for surplus, having surpluses of 50 per cent. or more of their capital. Many others have surpluses of 25 per cent. or more, and all seem to be striving to climb to 50 per cent. Loans have increased some $4,200,000 and deposits some $9,200,000. Of the total deposits 56½ per cent. belongs to farmers and stockmen, gentlemen upon whose woes Col. BRYAN loved to drop the sympathizing tear. The deposits of the wicked corporations amount to only 6½ per cent. of the whole. The 60,000 farmers and stockmen have $17,893,318 to their credit. No wonder they put the money above the man last November.

The only trouble that vexes the plutocratic souls of the Kansas bankers is how to invest their swollen deposits safely. This is the punishment of wealth, the penalty of accumulation. It is likewise the only sop of comfort, if comforting it be, that Col. BRYAN can find in this biennial report of Bank Commissioner BREIDENTHAL.

From the land of the Sunflower comes a mighty wind, the sound of rustling checks and greenbacks and silver certificates; and the old hot blast of Populism and Bryanism has all but ceased to blow.

The Workingman's Share.

While the agitator raises his voice complaining of the smallness of the workingman's share in what he helps to produce let us look at the annual report of Major I. B. BROWN, State Superintendent of Railways in Pennsylvania. This report says that 500,000 persons, in round numbers, are employed by the corporations operating the 25,800 miles of railroads in that State.

To these employees there was paid during the railroad year just closed the sum of $176,700,000 in wages. Although Major BROWN presents no analysis of these figures in the abstract given to the press, it is plain that the average annual wage of railroad employees in Pennsylvania is about $575. It must be remembered that among these employees there is a good sized army of clerical workers and unskilled laborers whose places can be supplied easily. This showing in regard to wages means a payment of $50 a month, on the average, to every person employed in any kind of work for the railroads in a great State.

Another phase of the railroad earnings and expenditures, as presented by this Pennsylvania report, bears directly on the question as to the workingman's share of what he produces. The total earnings of the railroads under consideration for the year were $498,000,000. The receipts from passenger traffic were only $109,700,000, or, in round numbers, 60 per cent. of the sum paid in wages to employees In other words, it took all of the passenger receipts and $67,000,000 more last year to pay the wages of the railroad employees of the State.

After paying all expenses of operation there was the sum of only $37,800,000 paid out as dividends. This means that the owners of the various properties received only about one-fifth as much from them as the employees. The wage workers not only got probably a larger return for their labor than the average earnings of the employed throughout the country, but they got five times as much in the aggregate as those who owned the railroads. And yet there are those who assert that the workingman does not get a reasonable share of this world's goods.

In still another respect this report has valuable information. Major BROWN shows that on three of the railroad systems in the State, the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Erie, the number of employees has increased no less than 8,800 within the year. The Pennsylvania system has taken on 4,500 more employees than it had the year before and has paid out $3,700,000 more for wages. The Baltimore and Ohio has 2,000 more employees and has paid out $1,150,000 more in wages as the result of the year's increase in business. The Erie has increased its force by 2,250 and the increase in compensation is $940,000. The total increase in wages paid on these three systems amounted to $5,800,000 more than a year ago.

It was against this kind of prosperity that Bryanism lifted up its voice asking the workingman to believe that he was wronged by the rest of society. While this style of untruthful appeal will probably be heard always from the discontented and from the designing agitator, it is a satisfaction to know that the wage worker knows where his best interests lie. The impressive vote given to MCKINLEY in Pennsylvania, even when a great strike was in operation in that State, shows that this country hasn't much to fear from any lack of intelligence on the part of its wage workers.

The "Social Centre" of New York.

The compiler of a "social register," or directory of people of more or less social prominence in New York, has discovered that at present the "social centre," as indicated by their residences, is at Fifth avenue and Forty-ninth street. Four years ago he fixed it at Forty-fourth street. That is, it has moved northward at the rate of a block and a half a year in that time, though generally the uptown movement has been at the rate of a block a year, or half a mile in ten years.

The movement of the "social centre" as pointed out by this gentleman has been from the Battery and Bowling Green, in 1820, to Barclay street in 1830, to St. John's Park in 1840, to Bond street and Lafayette place in 1850, to Tenth street and Washington Square in 1860, to Twenty-third street in 1870, to Twenty-ninth street in 1880, to the summit of Murray Hill in 1890 and now to the neighborhood of Fifth avenue and Fiftieth street. Ultimately, he suggests, Cathedral Heights and 110th street and Columbus avenue will become the fashionable centre.

Such a further movement, however, seems hardly probable, though that the Protestant Cathedral, with the neighboring Columbia University buildings, will make the region the centre of a cultivated population which will give dignity and superiority to New York, is not doubtful. Facilities of getting together are necessary to social intercourse. The opera also is a centre of union to which access must be reasonably easy and is it conceivable that the opera house will ever be moved to those heights along the North River, far away from the activities of the town and to a district which topographically forbids their entrance?

The people who make up what is called "society" must live near enough together to go to and fro among themselves, in order to keep up their social intercourse without undue strain to give their society vital warmth; and other conveniences which determine the selection of people's residences are considered by them. They cannot be a society if they are too far apart from each other for comfortable gathering or too far away from the public amusements which constitute an important part of their common recreations and functions. Already their residences are too widely separated; and as the town grows by hundreds of thousands of population in a decade, the more prosperous people will be forced to separate into distinct social circles or sets, in order to keep up the social intercourse of their members.

To the east of Central Park, along the line of Fifth avenue, great wealth has gravitated of recent years, so that it has come to be spoken of as "Millionaires' Row;" but the region is limited. Busy Harlem will stop its progress and the favored sphere is of little depth to the eastward of Fifth avenue. It cannot begin to contain the great body of residences which the enormous wealth of New York even as it is now demands, to say nothing of the vast increase which coming years of prosperity will bring hither or develop here in still larger measure.

Where, then, is it to go? Will it continue to press to the northward as fashion has done since the beginning of this century? If that is its destiny the suggestion that it will find its centre in Cathedral Heights may have some force; but in that case it would be necessarily a society by itself, almost as if it inhabited a distinct town. The religious and intellectual features which give distinction to the region about Cathedral Heights, moreover, are not attractive to fashion and have no essential congruity with it.

Instead, then, of this social movement continuing to the northward in line with the progress of a century, is it not more probable that it will now stop or even retrace its steps to some extent? The topographical features of Murray Hill and its contiguity to the active life of the town, without the necessity of disturbance by that bustle, seem to suggest that there the "social centre" may be reestablished, or, practically, may continue. For the purposes of social intercourse the region is desirable in its compactness, and to the east and the west there is room for the habitations of lesser wealth and mere reasonable competence. It is a district especially adapted to residences, and to them rather than to trade it is likely to be devoted. Fifth avenue, constituting its dividing line, has been invaded by trade already and the movement is going on toward Central Park, but not yet is that thoroughfare a good business street and the promise of its becoming so is not alluring. It is likely rather to be the situation of great hotels and of restaurants and places of fashionable relaxation which will tend to preserve rather than impair the desirability of the region for residences.

This district, too, invites the very improvement wealth and fashion would require. In great part its architecture is hideous, when not merely commonplace. It represents the social tastes and standards of a past generation and not of the New York as it is. Those houses can be torn down, to give place to more commodious and more tasteful dwellings, and the space in which such improvement can be made is so extensive that it will be sufficient for the accommodation of the strictly fashionable society of a long period to come; for such a society in the oldest and greatest of capitals is necessarily restricted in numbers and actually is circumscribed by the disposition no less than the convenience of people. It imposes obligations and requires aptitude which comparatively few are willing to assume or care to cultivate. It is a business of itself, and its natural tendency will be to get together rather than spread.

The Removal of the District Attorney.

We must dissent from the conclusion reached by Governor ROOSEVELT in removing Mr. ASA BIRD GARDINER from the office of District Attorney of this county.

Briefly, the Chief of Police, DEVERY, committed an offence nearly two months ago in the issuance of an order likely to provoke resistance to the law on election day. For this he was indicted and the next day the District Attorney was reported in the newspapers as expressing sympathy with the Chief of Police and disapproval of the indictment. Then the indictment was quashed, and now, with the original offender, DEVERY, free, the official accused or guilty of ill-advised or improper comment on the case is removed from office.

Governor ROOSEVELT'S treatment of the situation at election time was masterly beyond praise, but the closing of the chapter appears under another light.

Our Sanitary Work in Cuba.

The report of Major W. C. GORGAS of the Regular army, chief sanitary officer of Havana, on the health conditions of Havana for the month of November, reveals the beneficent results of American occupation to that city. There were fewer deaths and a lower death rate than in any month in the previous ten years.

Although almost within the torrid zone, Havana has a lower death rate than many of the larger cities of the world which have more or less severe winters. The death rate for November was 21.81, based on an estimated population of 250,000. Last year's census showed a population of 240,000 for the city and, with the normal increase of births and the arrival of 20,000 immigrants during the year, the estimate of a population of 250,000 is conservative. St. Petersburg has a death rate of 25.02. Munich's death rate is 23.09 and Dublin's is not less than 30.08.

The facts as to yellow fever, having not only an intimate sanitary relation but a commercial importance to our own country, especially the southern portion of it, are no less gratifying. The establishment of American control in Havana in 1898 was followed almost at once by decline of yellow fever. There were 214 cases during November, many of them due directly to the heavy immigration from Spain. The death rate from yellow fever, however, was far below the average of the last ten years and it caused little more alarm than if the cases had been of typhoid.

It is when the American system of medical inspection is considered that the enormous value of it becomes clear. Havana has nearly 27,000 dwellings. In 847 of these there were cases of yellow fever during the year. In 668 there was no recurrence of the disease after the first disinfection. In the 179 dwellings remaining 122 were made clean by a second disinfection, and a third treatment of this kind purified 26 of the remaining 57, leaving only 31 buildings out of 27,000 that still needed radical treatment. Major GORGAS says that "this is evidence that the result of isolation and disinfection is well worth the labor, money and time spent on them."

This showing should be the cause of national pride. It is safe to say that when the full history of the American occupation of Cuba, pending the settlement of the question as to the future of the island, is written, our rule there will be found to have been wise, humane and worthy of the high purposes which prompted the United States to intervene to the extent of war for an oppressed and suffering people.

The Weekly Bryan.

The good news comes from Lincoln that more than a thousand subscriptions to Col. BRYAN'S nascent weekly, *The Commoner*, have been sent without solicitation. In fact, no solicitors will be employed. As a producer of weekly essays the Colonel will refuse to divide his profits with middlemen. We had hoped rather than expected that the Colonel would give the commercial travellers who have been thrown out of a job by the Trusts, and the ABSALOMS whom the Trusts will not permit to have a job, a chance to earn a living by the light and lightsome employment of asking the producing classes to subscribe to *The Commoner* and to advertise in it. But the old Adam of monopoly is not dead in the Colonel's bosom. He will not waste any part of his expected profits in commissions. His establishment for the manufacture and sale of paramount issues is too well known to advertise. The dollars that have been devoted to dollar dinners will pay for fifty-two full meals of Bryanism next year. The financial prospect is alluring. Will even Col. JIM GUFFEY'S spouting oil wells yield as much money as Col. BRYAN'S spouting ink well?

Col. BRYAN will enlarge his paper from time to time in order to find room for his views, but he does not intend to write every line in it, except for a few months. He has "surrounded himself with a competent staff," among the members of which are some of the most eminent characters of the day, and others will be added according to the demand. The Hon. COIN HARVEY of Arkansas will be the financial editor. The Hon. WEBSTER DAVIS will write on foreign politics. Military affairs will be discussed by the Hon. JAMES HAMILTON LEWIS. The Hon. JERRY SIMPSON, formerly of the Lakes fleet, will handle naval affairs and live stock.

The Hon. EMILIO AGUINALDO will be the correspondent and general agent in the Philippines. The Hon. JOHN JACOB LENTZ will be the labor editor. The Hon JAMES K. JONES will conduct an astrological department. The sporting department will be in the hands of the Hon. CARTER HARRISON. The Hon. GAMALIEL BRADFORD has promised to write the letters to the editor. The Hon. JAMES STEPHEN HOGG will be the fashion editor. The Hon. GEORGE FRED WILLIAMS will be in charge of the children's page. The Hon. WILLIAM JOEL STONE will be the director of the fiction pages. The Hon. RICHARD CROKER will be the horse editor. The literary editor will be the Hon. FRANCIS B. SANBORN of Concord, Mass. Col. MOSE WETMORE will contribute a weekly article on Trusts. Col. BRYAN will give personal attention to the dramatic criticism.

With such a staff, and with the Colonel, who is a staff in himself, *The Commoner* will be far in advance of the weekly journal which PETTIGREW of South Dakota threatens to establish.

In an address to the voters of his Congress district the Hon. JOHN JACOB LENTZ of Columbus wails over "the business of corrupting the needy and miserable voters," and weeps for "the farm slave, the factory slave and the slaves in mercantile and professional life." He is sure that he would have been reelected if corruption and slavery had not beaten him. "In addition," he writes, "to the degrees of B. S., B. A. and B. L., won in the universities which I attended, I have recently taken the degree of B. B. B., 'Beaten by Bribery.'" Mr. LENTZ has not read his new sheepskin. It confers upon him the degree of Blustering Blowhard of Buncombe.

The State of New Jersey collected $1,884,669 in fees and taxes from corporations in one year. The kindly spirit with which the Octopus is welcomed in New Jersey gives deep pain to the Bryanite brethren, but it seems to be justified financially.

Single-Headed Police Commission Opposed.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the police controversy as to Chief Devery's recent transfers and assignments, he has certainly dealt a body blow to the claims of those theorists who profess to find in "a single-headed commission" a panacea for all the evils and abuses claimed to exist and flourish in the Police Department. Give us, these theorists are always saying, a "responsible head" to the Police Department and he will soon make an end to corruption and incompetence, the force of public opinion acting irresistibly to overawe and make amenable to law and reason the responsible head of the police.

Now, Chief Devery has been transferring and assigning captains and wardmen to suit himself, and there is a great outcry but, thus far, nothing else. The present Charter takes away from the Police Commissioners their former authority over the Chief of Police. He is no longer the agent of the board, but the executive head of the force. Section 292 makes Devery the "chief executive officer of the force." He is made chargeable with and responsible for "the execution of all laws." He is to assign to duties all the officers and members of the police force and has power to change such assignments whenever "in his judgment" the exigencies of the service require such change. He has the power to suspend without pay, pending trial, any member of the police force for a period of five days. He grants leaves of absence and is superior to the board of police in the management and control of the force.

An autocratic and irresponsible head of police has proved no better protection to the city, judging from the outcries of dissatisfied individuals than did the old method of bi-partisan control. It is a dangerous innovation to give any one man arbitrary police power, and a further extension of it by abolishing the Police Board will not be favored by any one thoroughly familiar with the history of the police of New York.

NEW YORK, Dec. 21. M. R.

A New Theory of Smell.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* There were so many things to attract in THE SUN of last Sunday that it was only to-day I was able to finish up with what I call my dessert page, that, namely, containing "Poems Worth Reading" and "Scientific Notes." One paragraph of the latter has aroused my especial interest, that which tells of a "new" theory of smell, just announced by two gentlemen of France. Heretofore, smell was supposed to be due to an actual emission of particles from the odorous body, but this so-called new theory bases the phenomenon upon ethereal undulations, as in the case of light.

The newness of this theory shows once more how little there is really new under the sun. Some twelve years ago a gentleman of this city, Mr. R. C. Rutherford, stated this same theory to me. He had been led to it, he said, by observing that certain odorous substances will continue to perfume the air for an indefinite period without suffering sensibly in size or weight. In this connection he cited an experiment—whether conducted by himself or some other I do not recall—where some such substance (a muskseed, I think) had been hung in a building the doors and windows of which were left open day and night, and notwithstanding the continuous change of air, the odor was as perceptible after the lapse of several years as at the beginning. He further said that he had forwarded his theory in a somewhat lengthy paper to Prof. Tyndall in England for consideration, but that no answer or acknowledgment was ever made to him—a seeming discourtesy which I know rankled in my old friend and preceptor's bosom, though he remained to the end a great admirer of the distinguished British physicist.

I offer this for what it is worth, simply to show that, whether or not the Frenchmen succeed in establishing smell on an undulatory basis, there is nothing so very new in the theory, even if nobody had antedated Mr. Rutherford with it.

EDWARD O'CONNOR.

168 WEST 135TH ST., Dec. 19.

Tippets Originally Ecclesiastical.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* As to the philology of the word "tippet," to which your correspondent, C. B. Loomis, refers in to-day's SUN, I would say that its original use was altogether ecclesiastical and dates from a period as early as the sixteenth century.

The Rev. Frederick George Lee in his "Glossary of Liturgical and Ecclesiastical Terms" defines the word as follows: "Tippet (Saxon, tæppet, from Latin *tapete*, cloth or hangings). A narrow garment or covering for the neck and shoulders; a kind of hood worn over the shoulders, which was fastened around the neck by a long pendent appendage called the liripipe. This latter portion was generally dropped during the sixteenth century and only the hood was worn. From this date the hood or tippet frequently assumed the shape of the mozetta, as can be gathered from such portraits as those of Cardinal Wolsey at Oxford and Cardinal Pole at Lambeth Palace. Abroad, about the same period, the hood, the cape, the mozetta and the tippet became identical. Anciently, when properly worn, the old hood was evidently very like the modern ecclesiastical tippet, as may be seen from examples figured on monumental brasses. The manner of wearing the modern hood or the literate's tippet over the back, depending from the neck by a ribbon, is a corruption and a practice eminently unmeaning."

Out of this ecclesiastical term "tippet" arose the ordinary appellation which refers to any covering for the neck and shoulders. The latter usage is modern, but the original theme is hoary with the dust of four hundred years. G. G. FAUGHT.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Dec. 19.

A Bachelor's Christmas Eve.

"It's Christmas Eve and the wind blows cold,
And shrieks and whistles with mournful air,
But while I have pipe and glass and book
For the outside world I've no care.

"Just across the street in my neighbor's house
There's a sound of laughter, a glare of light
From the big, tall towering Christmas tree,
Quite a jolly and pleasant sight.

"For the wife of his heart, there's a new silk gown,
For the daughters twain a brooch or pin,
While the heir of his poverty, ills and name
On his drum makes a fearful din.

"And they look at each other and smirk and smile
And kiss 'dear papa' 'till he's red in the face
While the idiot beams like a rubicund sun
And envies no man his place.

"And yet, with it all he's a jolly old file
And his wife's rather nice—though her tongue it will sway.
E'en the boy with the drum's not so bad for a boy
And one daughter's quite fair—'Mistress May.'

"A knock at the door—what a bore—well, come in—
'Tis a note from the jolly old blade o'er the way.
"We thought p'haps you'd like to come over and see
What our Santy's brought you—come, do—pray.'"

"What's this? A P. S. in a feminine hand?
Where's my hat? Where's my coat? Well? What's up, Mrs. Mill?"
Oh! what will you do with the punch that's just brewed?"
"Hang the punch—drink it up—if you will."

THOMAS H. WILSON.

MOURNING.

Some Remarks Concerning Contemporary Methods of Evincing Sorrow.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* To their last penny the poor endeavor to follow the fashion of the rich, especially in the matter of respect for the dead. Among the many sad sights in great cities perhaps the saddest of all is presented by the young girl in shabby mourning, leading by the hand some little tot, sister or brother, with broken little shoes, tiny dark togs, and a pinched little pale face. Picture her as you may, the likeness is bound to be perfect. Beautiful or plain, blonde or brunette, she may be seen every day in every crowded street. The gayer garments which she wore in happy yesterdays are probably in the pawnshop. Everything had to go for mourning. That had to be procured at no matter what sacrifices.

And here we are brought before a delicate problem, the solution of which must be left to the leaders of forms and fashions. Mourning, unfortunately, is found as far back as the light of history can reach. One might almost say that it always was and always will be. Nobody could think of doing away with it. But could it not be still more simplified to make it weigh less heavily upon the poor, especially poor orphans? Perhaps a little black crape, tastefully and artistically arranged, might be made to look just as impressive as the all-black outfit, which for rich and poor alike is at present *de rigueur*.

This is merely a very mild suggestion prompted by the strong suspicion, with all due respect for forms, that in the matter of mourning we still go too far. In old times the Egyptians when in mourning never washed their faces, and they let their hair grow long. The Persians cut theirs off. So did the Greeks and Romans. The Jews tore their clothes, abstained from washing and went about bareheaded and barefooted. The tearing of garments and putting ashes on the head formed part of the mourning customs of all great ancient nations. But the time for those peculiar exercises was necessarily short. Lachrymatories, or tear bottles, were fashionable in Greece and Rome, and some of them have been found in ancient tombs, empty witnesses of human vanity, and possibly of hypocrisy, in its ostentatious and studied forms of grief. It does not take long for time to dry up tears, and, even at the wish of offending that old establishment, Zeus & Co., I say now that the unearthed lachrymatories present the evidence of bad Greek and Roman taste. In our own days loud displays in the matter of mourning simply tend to throw doubts upon their sincerity. Great sorrows, as the French say, are always silent.

Among modern Syrians many families are brought to ruin by mourning, with all its costly feasts and commemorations. Something akin to those Syrian ceremonies, with their very natural sequences, existed in Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the dim days of France and Spain the custom was to wear white for mourning, just as it is now in China and Japan.

In all times and in all countries, civilized and savage, we find mourning for the dead. It is sad to think that, in spite of the consolations of many religions and the variously pictured joys of a thousand heavens, the great majority of the populations of the world looked and still look upon death as the worst of all calamities. Therefore, mourning must still be fashionable. King Death must have all his tribute; but perhaps some of them might be made less expensive. W.

NEW YORK, Dec. 22.

Suicide.

The total number of suicides in two great American cities during the last thirty years have been:

Period.	New York.	Chicago.
1870 to 1880	1,369	461
1880 to 1890	2,063	1,066
1890 to 1900	3,808	3,182

These numbers are very large (nearly one suicide daily for New York during the last decade), but they need to be put into another form in order to study the really important question which is: Are suicides increasing?

From a list of 28,563 suicides reported from fourteen great cities of the United States during the last generation, it appears that the number of deaths from that cause per 1,000,000 persons was in

1870	87	1885	131
1871	85	1886	136
1872	107	1887	137
1873	103	1888	142
1874	121	1889	142
1875	119	1890	136
1876	117	1891	157
1877	125	1892	153
1878	116	1893	165
1879	106	1894	180
1880	114	1895	163
1881	128	1896	189
1882	143	1897	196
1883	126	1898	205
1884	141	1899	187

The year of the panic, 1893, is well marked in this list and since that date there is a marked increase in the number of deaths by suicide.

She Got a Seat.

From the Albany Journal.

She came in with her arms full of bundles, for she had been Christmas shopping, and stood in front of the meek little man near the door and looked at him fixedly.

"There's a seat up ahead," suggested the conductor.

She gave the conductor a scornful glance. "Why should I walk so far," she demanded, "when I can get a seat here by simply looking hard at some one?"

The meek little man sighed and got up.

Chewing the Rag.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* If time has not already been called by THE SUN on the question of the parentage of the expression "chewing the rag," permit me to say that the distinction is claimed to rightfully belong to one Burnett, a somewhat noted linguistic "spell binder" of his time, the occasion being a football game played some ten or twelve years ago on Berkeley Oval. Its appearance as a figure of speech is opportune. Correctly placed, "chewing the rag" will stand in logical sequence to "chewing the cud." The latter has come down to us from the misty past—perhaps from a period approximating the promulgation of Levitical law—indissolubly linked with the mind-picture of the familiar ruminant ox (or cow) which in the act so perfectly simulates dreamy deep meditation; hence the well-worn expression "chewing the cud" of reflection, &c. But the figure has limited application. Pertinacity ceases with the mild-mannered ruminating beasts mentioned. And now comes "chewing the rag," to give adequate expression to those tumultuous emotional upheavals born of and incidental to the practices of the modern strenuous life. But, like its time-honored prototype, this new-born expression needs a telling metaphorical attachment, to the end that, thus accoutred, it, too, may go "ringing down the ages." What more appropriate figure can be offered than that of the bedraggled, distraught football player of our time? Surely, as the exponent of every known form of emotional perturbation he stands unrivalled. Then, who shall deny to him this capsheaf of glory? Pray, let "chewing the rag," hand in hand with this its most appropriate object lesson, join the procession. C. M.

DETROIT, Dec. 20.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Describing the bitterness of soul of the members of the Bay Ridge A. C. F. F. team after their defeat by the St. Peter's F. F. team on Thanksgiving Day, 1893, the local poet says:

"The game was lost and we were sore,
Not one of us could brag,
But we hung around the clubhouse door
And bitterly chewed the rag."

Hoping this may serve to give proper weight to the phrase, M. A. C.

The Bicycle and Health.

Translated from the Strasburg Medical Gazette by the Medical Record.

Just Lucas-Championnière states that cycling, like all exercise, should be taken up moderately. The heart should be carefully watched, not because this exercise is more harmful in this respect than others, but because it can be indulged in much longer without giving a sense of fatigue. Vicious attitudes, such as a crooked posture, although not being so important as is generally supposed, nevertheless ought to be avoided. In a long journey the position in which the body is moderately inclined is best for the organs of respiration and circulation. The position in the saddle is hard to decide upon for every case. Practice shows that the perineum accommodates itself to the saddle better than would have been supposed. Moderation in eating is a necessity in muscular work, as is also abstention from alcohol.

The bicycle should vary in details for the man, the woman, the child, the racer and the invalid. In the case of a man, the perineum, with its component parts, should be carefully watched. As to the woman, this exercise is easier for her than for the man, since she is more supple. It causes far less fatigue than walking. Its effects on the pelvic organs are good. The child does not feel so much fatigue as the adult, but it should use the bicycle with the greatest moderation. As to the invalid, many ailments are improved or even cured by the use of the bicycle, e. g., gastro-intestinal troubles, deformities of the vertebral column, &c. Indeed, the author believes that this branch of the subject is so extensive as to deserve a special chapter.

GERMANY IN THE RED SEA.

Curious Process by Which the Sultan Gave the Kaiser a Coaling Station.

The latest move of Germany in the Red Sea has created very considerable interest in the Navy departments of the other European countries. It may be remembered that during the first complications of the Chinese question the German warships and transports were compelled to call for coal at British ports, Germany not possessing a single naval station between her own coasts and her Chinese possessions. This disadvantage has in part been remedied so far as the Red Sea is concerned, and German ships need no longer depend on the British port of Aden at which to replenish their coal bunkers. The story of the acquisition of the German coaling station in the Red Sea is interesting in many ways, not the least being that in which it exhibits the firm hold Germany has on Turkey and the far-reaching aims of Emperor William's policy toward the Sultan.

Quite recently a few short telegrams appeared in the papers concerning an alleged difficulty between the Turkish and German Governments over the occupation by the latter of an island somewhere on the Arabian coast in the Red Sea. Various contradictory stories were given out and finally it was officially announced by the Turkish Government that the island in question, Farzan, had not been ceded to Germany, as had been erroneously stated. The real facts, however, are so characteristic of modern diplomatic methods that they are worth recording.

At the beginning of September last a German vessel, said to be the cruiser Marie, of 2,169 tons with a coal capacity of 250 tons, dropped anchor one day off the Island of Kamaran on the Arabian coast about midway between Hodeida and Loheia in the Province of Yemen, and about 200 miles north of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. At Kamaran the Marie shipped an Arab pilot and steamed away. Her subsequent movements are said to have been somewhat devious, but after a few days she appeared at the Island of Farzan, which is of considerable size and is reputed to contain mineral wealth in the shape of iron, coal and petroleum, and is about eighty miles north of Kamaran. Its pearl fisheries are also of substantial value. At Farzan the Marie struck the ground, whereupon the Captain requested the port officer, a Turkish official, to furnish boats to unload some of the coal in order to ease his ship and get her afloat. The Turk declined, alleging that he had no orders on the subject from his superiors. The German Captain then discharged fifty-three tons of coal in his own boats on the island, but when the vessel was floated he did not reship the coal but stuck up a board over the heap notifying all whom it might concern that the coal was the property of the German Government. He then presented to the Mudir of the island a gold watch and ring, and steamed away to Karaman saying he would be back in a week.

The Mudir was so impressed with this, to him, inexplicable proceeding, that he sent a minute detailed account of it to his superior, the Mutessarif of Hodeida, who, in his turn, transmitted it to the Vali or Governor General of Yemen, not omitting the matter of the gold watch and ring. The Vali immediately ordered a Turkish naval officer to proceed to Kamaran to demand an explanation of his proceedings from the German officer. According to report the latter apologized and consented to return at once to Farzan and take away the coal, stipulating first, however, that he should be allowed to land six of his men who were ill. The Turkish naval officer grew dubious as to the scope of his powers, and telegraphed to the Governor General for instructions. The reply was that the men might land if the German Captain would certify that they were left behind to regain their health. To this the German demurred and at last sailed away.

Before he left, however, he sent two telegrams in cipher to the Admiralty at Berlin. The Governor General also was busy wiring to Constantinople, from where came instructions saying that if the coal was not removed from Farzan, it was to be confiscated. The Marie meanwhile went off on a cruise, leisurely steaming in the neighborhood of Jebel Teir, the well-known volcanic island in the Red Sea, and after a few days returned to Farzan, being carefully piloted by a boat taking soundings to the anchorage. The instructions from Constantinople, which had been sent on to Farzan, were shown to the Captain, but the German refused to reship his coal and went back to Kamaran.

Three days after his arrival a change, amounting to a panic, came over the Turkish officials. A telegram from Constantinople told them to reverse all their previous actions, and said that the Sultan and the Kaiser were the best of friends, and that everything must be done to meet the wishes of the Germans. Not only were facilities to be provided for storing the German coal, but a depot must be constructed in which it could be placed. The depot, however, was not to be at Farzan, but at Koomah, another island six miles from Farzan. The original instructions were for a depot for 5,000 tons, but before anything could be done they were changed, and storage for 10,000 tons was ordered. Three officials were sent at once to make all the necessary arrangements, which they did, returning to Hodeida at the end of October, and the work was put in hand. At the latest advices a Turkish gunboat was stationed at Koomah, and the Turkish flag was flying over the island. By a curious coincidence the Turkish Embassy in London issued to the English press the day before the return of the Turkish officials from Koomah a denial of the report that Farzan had been ceded to Germany, but was silent about Koomah. The truth about the matter is said to be that Germany has obtained a concession from the Sultan for a coaling station on the island of Koomah, the sovereignty remaining with Turkey. In this way complications with other countries are avoided by Turkey and the Germans have a substantial advantage. With regard to Kamaran, it is to be remarked that the British maps marking that island as British are in error. It belongs to Turkey and is controlled by the International Quarantine Board. It is managed by a Mudir and other Turkish officials, and there are five or six quarantine doctors stationed there. England has nothing to do with the place except that a British Consul sometimes visits the island during the season of the pilgrimage to Mecca on account of the numbers of Indian and other British Mussulman subjects who take part in it.

A Remedy for Smallpox.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I send you a newspaper clipping from the *San Jose News* of some years ago, which gives a cure for smallpox, with the discoverer's comments on it. K. S. B. D.

"This recipe has been used to my knowledge in hundreds of cases, and I know it will prevent or cure smallpox, though the pittings are filling. When Jenner discovered the cowpox in England the world of science hurled an avalanche of fame upon his head, but when the most scientific school of medicine in the world—that of Paris—published this recipe as a panacea for smallpox, it passed unheeded. It is unfailing as fate and conquers in every instance. It is harmless when taken by a well person. It will also cure scarlet fever; here is the recipe as I have used it and cured my children of scarlet fever; here it is as I have used it to cure smallpox:

"Sulphate of zinc, one grain; foxglove (digitalis), one grain; half a teaspoonful of sugar; mix with two teaspoonfuls of water. When thoroughly mixed add four ounces of water. Take a spoonful every hour. Either disease will disappear in twelve hours. For a child smaller doses, according to age. If counties would counsel their physicians to use this there would be no need of pesthouses. If you value advice and experience, use this for that terrible disease."

Non-Voters.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It became apparent to nearly every one just after the election of Nov. 6 that the total vote of the United States had fallen off by 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 of votes from what was expected—based upon the preceding election of 1896. Having for the last five years been accustomed to keep a tally of all adult male individuals of New York city whom I met in business intercourse, and among my comrades, the wage earners and laboring men of our city, the total number which I can class as personal being 1,271, and having the facilities to obtain the desired information, therefore in the middle of last month I went systematically about it and obtained the following political facts which may prove an interesting item to your readers.

Out of the 1,271 individuals I obtained the result of 1,000, so as to make it easy for taking a pro rata rate from the experience of one individual among his personal acquaintainces. Here is the result of 1,000 voters: 724 voted for McKinley, 582 being of various Protestant religious creeds and 142 being Roman Catholic; 180 voted for Bryan, 136 being of Roman Catholic creed and 44 being of Protestant creed, and 96 voters did not vote at all—or a fraction less than 10 per cent. of the total of 1,000. Out of the 96 votes not cast, 23 were in doubt and even did not register; the other 73 votes were prevented by various causes. I am satisfied that this percentage of 10 out of 100 holds nearly good throughout the entire voting population of our country, and therefore our great elections run the danger of being decided, either one way or the other, by the neglect or causes of prevention by at least one and a half million of our qualified citizens not exercising their American duty of franchise; and the bulk of that lost vote comes from the ranks of the wage earners, mechanics and laborers of the land.

At the fall of next year those silent, independent and circumstances preventing voters are going to take a holiday in full force and go a-gunning for game, and something is going to drop—it won't be a back yard cat, but will be a front yard "tiger."

A FIFTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN WATCHER,

BROOKLYN, Dec. 17.

WAR TAX REDUCTIONS.

Senate Finance Committee to Treat the Subject Scientifically.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 23.—Contrary to general opinion the Finance Committee of the Senate has not yet begun the consideration of the war revenue reduction bill recently passed by the House of Representatives. It is not likely, moreover, that anything will be accomplished during the holiday recess toward framing the amendments that are to be recommended by the committee. Senator Aldrich, the chairman, and Senator Allison have undertaken the task of going over the various statements of the financial condition of the Treasury and estimates of probable surplus in the future with the hope of learning, approximately, at least, to what limit Congress can safely go in reducing the war taxes. When this has been ascertained the work of revising the House bill will begin and will be pushed to completion as rapidly as possible. No hearings will be given, and it has already been decided that no information with regard to committee recommendations shall be given out until the bill in its entirety is ready to be reported to the Senate.

It is the aim of the members of the Finance Committee to present a measure framed on scientific principals, not a bill patched up to meet the desires of various interests to be affected by it. The plan of the committee is to have a bill that will remove the burdens that are most heavily upon those least able to support them and to collect the necessary revenue from those who are able to pay it. With this object in view taxes that are paid by individuals like the stamp tax on telegraph messages and express receipts will be removed altogether, and those like the stamp tax on bank checks retained, with a horizontal reduction in such taxes as are paid indirectly. The beer tax is likely to be left as agreed to by the House, at least there will be no reduction recommended by the Senate over the House rates. If any change is recommended it is apt to be an increase.

Until Senators Aldrich and Allison have reported to the committee the result of their work to ascertain the probable surplus, the aggregate amount of reduction will not be decided upon. It is well known that the committee favor the plan of taking off now all the taxes that can be safely removed within the next four years so that there need be no more tariff or tax legislation during the life of the McKinley Administration. Whether the amount of reduction is to be $40,000,000, as provided by the House bill, or $20,000,000, as recommended by the President and Secretary Gage, or a greater or less amount than this, no member of the committee knows. Soon after Congress reconvenes, however, the work of revising the House bill will be taken up in earnest.

THE INDIAN SCHOOLS.

Industrial Training the Most Important Feature of the Work.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 23.—The third annual report of Estelle Reel, General Superintendent of Indian Schools, says that while those who immediately supervise the schools realize the magnitude of their work, they do not feel that the whole burden rests upon them. The gradual freeing of the Indian from the reservation system is throwing more and more of the responsibility on the Indian himself. "Our moral work within the educational," the report says, "is one of tremendous import, and our hope is in education, based on character and carried along industrial lines. There is a responsiveness to ethical training in the Indian as well as in the white man and when we have taught the Indian the speech of civilization and the crafts required by his environment, he may safely pass from our hands to the saving power of self-support."

Miss Reel has made industrial training in the Indian schools the most important feature in the work of educating the Indian. She believes in giving the Indian child a thorough training in the fundamental English branches, but thinks it unwise to spend years over subjects for which, in all probability, he will have no use in later life, when the time could be employed in acquiring skilled industrial arts. She insists that every boy who is graduated from an Indian school shall know how to farm in an intelligent manner, and have a sufficient knowledge of blacksmithing and the trades to enable him to shoe his horse, mend his wagon, build his house, and do general repair work relating to a farm. She emphasizes the vital importance of teaching the home-making duties to every Indian girl, asserting that this is even more essential than the teaching of trades to the boys.

Here Early and to Stay.

From the Spectator.

In the very oldest fossil-bearing rocks no insects are found. The very oldest fossil is a kind of polyp, making reefs of limestone, when as yet the insects had not appeared, and it "flourished" in Canada.

The first insect known to have existed, a creature of such vast antiquity that it deserves all the respect which the parvenu man can summon and offer to it, was—a cockroach. This, the father of all black beetles, probably walked on the earth in solitary magnificence when not only kitchens, but even kitchen middens were undreamed of possibly millions of years before neolithic man had even a back cave to offer with the remains of last night's supper for the cockroach of the period to enjoy. His discovery established the fact that in the Silurian period there were insects, though, as the only piece of his remains found was a wing, there has been room for dispute as to the exact species.

Mr. Goss in his preface to the second edition of his book notes says that what is probably a still older insect has been found in the lower Silurian in Sweden. This was not a cockroach, but apparently something worse. If the Latin name, *Protocimex silurius*, be literally translated it means the original Silurian bug.

Faithful Shepherd Dogs.

From the Morning Oregonian.

Last October a cold spell in Montana killed a sheep herder in the Great Falls district, two feet of snow covered the range in places and the thermometer indicated 40 degrees below zero.

The herder was frozen to death on the prairies while caring for the sheep, and it was three days before his fate was known to his employers. Two shepherd dogs were with him when he died, and one of these stayed with his body while the other attended to the sheep, just as though the herder had been with him. The dog drove them out on the range in the morning and back again at night, guarding them from wolves and preventing them from straying off. Neither dog had anything to eat during the three days' vigil, so far as could be ascertained, but the 2,500 sheep thrived as well, apparently, as though directed by human agency. The singular fact about the matter is that these faithful animals would have starved to death rather than harm one of the sheep left in their charge.

Fooled by Tipsy Ducks.

From the Chicago Inter Ocean.

PEORIA, Ill., Dec. 18.—Attorney Robert Scholes, local game warden and well-known sportsman, is the victim of a joke. Yesterday Scholes startled the community with an announcement in which he declared that the ducks shot along the Illinois River were affected with a form of cholera, rendering them unfit to be eaten. It developed to-day that the game warden was somewhat amiss in his diagnosis of the case. Upstream hunters in the neighborhood of Chillicothe recently spread broadcast over the duck haunts several bushels of corn well soaked in alcohol. The ducks were made drunk by this corn and were slaughtered by the hunters. When Scholes heard of the inebriated ducks he pronounced it a mysterious disease.

Saved by Knowing How to Fall.

From the Columbus Dispatch.

MASSILLON, Ohio, Dec. 18.—Thomas Dillon, a workman employed in the erection of the new building for the Schuster Brewing Company, fell fifty feet yesterday, and escaped with a few bruises. Dillon turned four somersaults in his descent, and struck two landings before succeeding in catching himself between two iron beams. Dillon was once an athlete and acrobat, and his experience along this line undoubtedly saved his life.

Not a Climbing Delegate.

From the Utica Observer.

"Steeple Charley," who was recently employed on St. John's Church, was, it is said, approached by a man one day at the church who asked the steeple climber in jest to show him his union card.

"Come up and I'll show it to you," said the climber, pointing to the cross on the north tower. "I always keep it where I am working."

The invitation was declined.