

CURRENT COMMENT

A QUEER WORLD

A pin has a head, but has no hair;
A clock has a face, but no mouth there;
Needles have eyes, but they cannot see;
A fly has a trunk without lock or key;
A timepiece may lose, but cannot win;
A cornfield dimples without a chin;
A hill has no leg but has a foot;
A wineglass has a stem, but not a root;
A watch has hands, but no thumb or finger;
A boot has a tongue but is no singer;
Rivers run though they have no feet;
A saw has teeth, but it does not eat;
Ash trees have keys, yet never a lock;
And baby crows without being a cock.

—Christina Rossetti.

KENTUCKY STATESMAN DEAD

Father Time has claimed John G. Carlisle, a Kentucky Democratic statesman, who made himself famous in the United States senate and subsequently as secretary of the treasury under President Grover Cleveland. That he was one of the foremost men of the country, when in his prime, cannot be denied and that he was a thinker of the most profound type cannot be denied and for those reasons his death, despite the fact he has been sick for a long, long time is to be regretted. While his life was thrown among the financiers of the country, that is the men who manipulate legislation in favor of themselves and their associates, nevertheless he was a man of a broad-gauged and liberal mind and did many things in the interest of the common people of the country.

One of the surest ways to kill a movement is to hold it up to ridicule. Lawyers often adopt this method successfully, newspapers revel in it, and when opportunity permits, politicians use it unsparingly. The men of China who are in our country have felt and are feeling the same sting on account of their queues and costumes. Men of other nationalities smile when the Chinaman's long queue bobs up, and this has caused American Chinese to keep them, for the most part, neatly tucked away under their caps. The queue was forced upon the Chinese as a badge of submission about 260 years ago by their Manchura conquerors who affected this style of head dress. Later the Chinese grew really proud of their appendage and elaborated it with bright ribbons. However, having become conversant with the customs and manners of other nations they become dissatisfied with their queues or rather unwilling to longer make themselves ridiculous from civilized men's view point. Hence, the Chinese of the Pacific coast have sent a petition to the Emperor asking permission to cut off their queues. If the custom of cutting them off were adopted in China, it would create patriotism in the Chinese themselves inasmuch as the adoption was a badge of submission, and outsiders would look upon it as another one of the signs of awakening with which China has in the last few years let the world know that she also is to be counted among the civilized nations of the world.

The purchase of the picture of Frederick W. Freer, one of Chicago's most noted painters and long an instructor in the art institute, has been held up by the Art Institute purchasing committee on the grounds that it is immoral. Mr. Freer represented himself with a cigarette in his hand. Although the Institute contains drinking scenes, fighting scenes, pictures and statues of disrobed men and women, the picture of a talented man regardless of the beauty of the work savored too much of the sporting element. Mrs. Freer, the widow, who was forced by necessity to offer the picture to the Institute for purchase, is rather disappointed over the nature of the opposition. She told with much feeling how her husband had worked long and secretly on it and finally presented it to her as a surprise. She has refused to allow the cigarette to be painted out. The question of the immorality of the picture is unique. The fact that the artist selected a cigarette as an adornment or embellishment for his handiwork is a departure and yet there are with it as many pros as cons. If nude pictures are admired for the superiority of the workmanship of their creators regardless of the fact that, looked at from some view points they might inspire unholy thoughts, the picture of a master painter with a cigarette between the very fingers which created it should doubtless appeal from more than one view point. The question brings forward another thought: the inconsistency of so publicly indulging in a habit when the evidence of the same in a picture stamps it as immoral.

THE PREVENTION OF FOREST FIRES

One of the serious questions confronting those battling for the preservation of the country's forests is how best to prevent the setting of fires by steam railways operating through the country. Statistics from reliable sources show that in forest lands traversed by railways the coal-burning locomotive has been the cause of from twenty-five per cent up to in some regions ninety per cent of the forest fires. New York state has shown its progressiveness by taking hold of this question with a firm hand. The entire abolition of coal-burning locomotives from the Adirondacks will have been accomplished this year. Acting on the petition of the Forest, Fish, and Game Commissioner, the Public Service Commission has ordered the installation of oil-burning engines on the lines of the New York Central and Delaware and Hudson operating through the Forest Preserve. The Delaware and Hudson has already fully complied with the order, and the New York Central will have completed the installation of oil-burners by September 1. The safety of oil-burning locomotives has already been demonstrated in New York. The Raquette Lake Railway nineteen miles in length, in the heart of the Adirondacks, which by statute is required to use oil-burning locomotives, has been operating for ten years, and no forest fire has ever been set by one of its locomotive engines. The only fire on its line was caused by a coal burning locomotive which had been used, in violation of law, to haul a special train. The Southern Pacific Railroad, with 1,100 oil-burning locomotives, furnishes unquestioned evidence of the practicability of such operation. The use of oil-burning engines on the Rangeley division of the Maine Central Railroad between Austin Junction and Kineon station, a distance of fifty miles through thick forests, undertaken voluntarily by the railway, "to eliminate the risk of fire and reduce the cost of patrolling the road to guard against fire," is an illustration more convincing than argument. This extreme action on the part of New York state followed the great devastation of the season of 1908, when nearly 370,000 acres of wooded land in the Forest Preserve were burned over, villages destroyed and the property loss and suffering of inhabitants of the district affected most serious. The awful lesson of 1903, when 465,000 acres were burned over and a loss of \$3,500,000 incurred, had not proved a warning, and was so soon forgotten that in 1908 the railways as well as the state found themselves unprepared practically for the prevention of fire damage. The 1908 fires in the Adirondacks destroyed over \$125,000 worth of lumber and logs and nearly \$50,000 worth of buildings, besides the loss to state lands amounting to \$644,000. On thousands of acres which were first burned in 1903 the 1908 fires consumed the vegetable matter or "duff" which forms the floor of the forest, and which will prevent reforestation for many years. No fires from locomotives have occurred on the lines of the Delaware and Hudson this year, and that line is operating its trains entirely with oil-burning locomotives on satisfactory schedules. On another line there has been one bad forest fire, which has been traced to a locomotive sent out with a defective ash-pan which scattered hot coals along the tracks. Twenty-seven states have given this subject attention and taken measures to lessen the dangers from, and prevention of, forest fires along railway lines. Within a few years Alabama, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Tennessee have required spark-arresters on engines operated in or near forest lands; Idaho and Oregon have passed laws on the subject. The requirement of oil-burning engines is being agitated by Alabama, Pennsylvania and Oregon. Arkansas, South Dakota and Virginia, by special statute, caused by their operation, and Massachusetts and South Dakota give to railways an insurable interest in abutting property. California in 1906 made an appropriation for the cutting of fire lanes and fire trails on the south slope of the San Bernardino Mountains, in co-operation with the Forest Service, and quite recently the great Northern Railway Company and the Northern Pacific Railway Company signed an agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture which provides for co-operation between these railways and the Forest Service in the matter of fire control along their rights of way. General recommendations for better protection against forest fires have recently been made by the governors of Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan and New Jersey. Michigan in 1907 gave the general subject of fire prevention to its Special Forester and Tax Land Commission for investigation, and enacted a thorough amendment of its fire laws. New York, however, has set the standard by requiring, under state direction, effectual and positive remedies for preventing forest fires by the railways.

PERSONS TALKED ABOUT

Jack Johnson, the heavyweight fistic champion of the world, sails for Europe next week to begin a forty week vaudeville engagement and for which he is to receive \$3,500 per week and expenses. He is the highest salaried theatrical star on the stage.

Powell Clayton, editor of the Little Rock State Republican of Arkansas, says, over his own signature, that something like thirty-eight per cent of the white voters of Arkansas have been disfranchised by the Democrats of that state, which to his mind is carrying a good thing too far. The white Republicans permitted the Democrats to exterminate the black Republicans without protest, hoping to profit thereby, but instead of profiting, they too, are being consumed, so take your medicine.

William F. Gude is heading a movement to make Washington City the convention hub for not only the United States, but South and Central American countries. Mr. Gude is president of the chamber of commerce of Washington City, which is a very active organization. His idea is to raise sufficient money to give such conventions free halls and to an extent entertain the members while in the city. To perfect such a movement would give that city a world wide advertisement and make it the center of attraction for all America.

Francisco I. Modero, who ran for president against Diaz, is now in jail in that country, charged with having made use of seditious utterances in his late campaign. The seditious utterances that Madero made use of however, were to the effect that Diaz had used the office of president of Mexico for his personal aggrandizement, which Diaz would not stand for. Evidently Madero had been reading Hearst's syndicate news.

N. B. Broward, is the name of one of the senators of Florida and it is said of him that, he started life as a steamboat deck hand. Senator Broward may have at one time worked on a steamboat as a deck hand, but if he did, those in Florida, who elected him to the senate, did not know it at the time or they would never have done so. The average white man of the South is too darn lazy to work himself and he has no use for any other white man who will make even a bluff at work.

Mrs. Catherine Van Voorhis, who has the credit of having made the largest flag that ever surrounded the capitol building at Washington, D. C., though eighty years of age, recently attended a suffrage meeting at Washington and was received by President Taft with special ceremonies. She lives in Rochester, New York.

J. C. Spooner, a former Michigan United States senator, is out with a statement to the effect that, the United States is governed to death. What called forth the remark was the move on the part of a number of physicians to have a department of public health established in our government. He thinks such is absolutely uncalled for and would do no good if established, except to give a few fellows soft snaps at the tax payers expense. The theory might be applied to the various state governments, where all kinds of commissions have been established in order to give a few ward clacking politicians good places at the expense of the public.

Rev. Charles Stelzle, a New York divine, is of the opinion that the church is losing ground and the preachers and those who conduct the churches are directly responsible for the condition. He argues there should be less building up of church edifices and more building up of men, and he might have added, there should be more building up of Christianity, of the kind embodied in the Golden Rule and less of church hypocrisy as was exhibited in the World's Sunday School Convention recently held in Washington City.

Lyman Abbott, the well known New York editor, says the paramount issues in the coming campaign in those states where the direct primary law is in vogue is already on are: Direct Primaries, Congressional Organization, Railway Regulation and Conservation. On these issues the Republicans are almost as badly divided among themselves as they are from the Democrats and to settle the vexed questions a great many Republicans will go out of their party and for the time being affiliate with the Democrats.

Because Paderewski did not need the money he sold a Seattle property which he bought for speculation at a profit of \$2,000. If he had been dead broke and owned that lot and offered it for sale in order to get out even on it, he would not have been able to have disposed of it at a light loss to say nothing of a handsome profit.