The Democrat.

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The Democrat

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Simon and Atwater

Frogs have got to be such an available cash commodity up at Spirit Lake that the owners of marshes execute chattel mortgages on the croakers.—Des Moines Iowa State Register.

We sometimes wonder if newspaper men generally appreciate the old subscriber at his true value. We mean the old standby who takes the home paper year after year, through evil as well as through good report, and pays his subscription regularly just the same as he would any other honest debt. As a general thing the old subscriber is patient and slow to wrath. He will overlook many little slights from the editor—slights which the man who borrows his reading would not stand a minute. If one of his calves gets its leg broke and the fact isn't mentioned in the next issue he doesn't seem to feel the slight in the least, or if half a dozen of his hens die with cholera morbus and the editor doesn't set out a two dollar adv in order to make room to herald the news to a waiting world, he just worries right along as though he hadn't been mistreated at all. He is always jolly—never fails to ask "how's tricks?" when he comes into the office, and drops a word of praise for the paper when he leaves. God bless the old subscriber. We love him and if we sometimes slight him in order to give space to some saphead who isn't worthy to buckle his shoes, it is because we know that he is so broadminded and charitable that he will never mind it.—Reinbeck Standard.

Growth of Fraternal Insurance.

The Chicago Tribune's Insurance expert declares that every fifth man with whom you shake hands in the United States and in British Columbia is a member of a secret organization, counting out his possible college fraternity.

Ten years ago a liberal estimate was one man to every eight in secret orders.

At the present rate of growth in the United States and in British possessions to the north the present ratio of one to five may be three to five in 1914. For in the United States, where the population increases one-tenth in a decade, the figures of the secret societies in ten years have been almost doubled.

In the year 1904 the figures of the secret orders, reported by the central organizations, show a membership of 7,414,173.

In 1894 these figures, reported in the same manner, showed a membership of only 4,126,375.

In a period when the population of the United States and Canada was increasing twenty millions, the membership of the secret fraternities was increasing 8,300,000 or nearly fifty per cent. The increase in the Masonic lodges has been greater than ever before in their history; the Modern Woodman have gained more than 600,000 in ten years, and are second to the Masonic, Pythian and Odd Fellows' orders.

This tabulated statement of the increase also shows the total membership in 1894 and 1904:

	1894	1904
Oddfellows	746 484	1,193,749
Free Masons	792,333	965 000
Knights of Pythias	418,944	562,327
Ancient Order of United Workmen	325,000	460,000
Junior Order of United Mechanics	175,000	116,106
Improved Order of Red Men	153,550	334,495
Knights of Honor	129 128	82,000
Royal Arcanum	143,468	277,974
Ancient Order of Hibernians of America	100,000	145,000
Ancient Order of Foresters of America	115,000	221,974
Knights of the Maccabees	96,338	350,441
Knights and Ladies of Honor	73,000	73,000
Modern Woodmen of America	85 617	711 923
Sons of Temperance	67,603	34,789
American Legion of Honor	62,303	....
Order of United Mechanics	50,404	43,582
Ladies of the Maccabees	......	130,268
Knights of the Modern Maccabees	......	115,592
Knights of Columbus	......	98,000
Ladies' Catholic Benevolent association	......	87,400
Knights of the Golden Eagle	......	70,000
Tribe of Ben Hur	......	68,813
Woodmen of the World	......	217,000
Knights of Malta	......	27,000
Equitable Aid Union	87,460	....
National Union	34,678	67 223
Royal Templars of Temperance	27,811	....
Order of Chosen Friends	41,274	....
Catholic Mutual Benefit association	38,000	62,000
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks	35,000	154,000
Catholic Benevolent Legion	32,000	38,286
Ancient Order of Foresters	30,428	38.789
Independent Order of B'nai B'rith	30,000	30,000
Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen	25,000	....
Catholic Knights of America	24,000	....
Order of United Friends	20,164	....
Order of the Golden Cross	20,275	....
United Order of Pilgrim Fathers	15,600	....
Ancient Order of Druids	15,000	....
Improved Order of Hepsotaphs	15,217	57,255
Order of Eagles	......	67,000
Court of Honor	......	66,449
Protected Home Circle	......	55,000
B'rith Abraham Order	......	42,781
Brotherhood of American Yoeman	......	37,684
Order of Gleaners	......	57,400
Independent Order of Foresters	......	220,000
New England Order of Protection	14,996	33,361
Royal Society of Good Fellows	11,055	....
Smaller Organizations	190,000	361,592
Total	4.126,375	7,414,173

The statistics make clearly evident the fact that fraternal insurance is growing in popularity. It is the "poor man's insurance" and for that reason should be closely safeguarded by law, which now it is not. The management of fraternal societies is not such as to insure, in all cases, a healthful, enduring organization, and it becomes more and more urgently necessary for the legislature to give this form of insurance their closest attention. There is as much reason why the duties of the insurance commissioner should be extended to investigation of fraternal as well as old line insurance companies. If a man is in a company that may not be able to pay its death claims he should be so advised. The state ought to extend to him and his heirs the proper measure of protection.—Dubuque Telegrah Herald.

Bobby's Old Blue Shirt.

I hunted through the storeroom once—and hunted twice again;
The closets and the attic, too—it wasn't there, 'twas plain.
I kept on searching hopefully (disclosing piles of dirt),
But couldn't find a single trace of Bobby's old blue shirt.

"I know he's had it recently, it can't be far away,"
I kept repeating to myself, though still I looked all day;
But no succes my efforts crowned, and so, my pride some hurt,
I gave up hunting everywhere for Bobby's old blue shirt.

I took some stockings (plus some holes) down to the porch to sew;
And idly noticed on our lot a kite that wouldn't go—
'Twas Bobby held the tail, and there, along with my old skirt,
Ripped into shreds and trailing down, was Bobby's old blue shirt

—E. St. J. Bromley.

Concerning Weather Forecasts.

As far as may be practicable the U. S. Weather Bureau desires to disseminate information relative to its work, and the elementary principles of meteorology. To this end, J. R. Sage, Section Director of the Climate and Crop Service, gives us the following:

Benjamin Franklin was a pioneer in meteorology, as well as in the correlated science of electricity. His kite experiment, demonstrating the identity of lightning with artificial electric sparks, gave him world-wide fame; but no less important from a scientific point of view, and of greater practical value, was his discovery of the rotary circulation of winds in the general storms of the Atlantic coast, and a progressive movement in a northeasterly direction. By injuries addressed to numerous correspondents and travelers in the colonies he reached the conclusion that the northeast storms of that region began at extreme southwest points about a day earlier than at Boston. From a careful study of the mass of facts thus laboriously collected he formulated his tentative philosophy of storms.

Franklin's contemporaries, and the people generally, were not deeply impressed by this new theory. There was nothing spectacular about it, appealing to the popular imagination like his famous kite-flying experiment performed amid thunder and lightning. He was a century in advance of his age. And the bulk of the people were biased by the teachings of the oldtime astrologers that the moon is the dominating force, with the planets as adjuncts, in the production of storms and weather changes. But Franklin was unique among the philosphers of the eighteenth century. Though a great reader of books and current literature, in scientific studies he consulted chiefly the book of nature. His methods were characterized by simplicity and directness. He was richly endowed with the genius of common-sense. He gave little head to the occult doctrines and mysticisms of ancient philosophy. To him the vaporings of the oldtime astrologers were of less value than the soughing of the east wind, which was a portent of a coming storm from the westward.

In the field of meterology, Franklin was essentially an explorer, setting up landmarks for guidance of future investigators. Following his line of research, in the nineteenth century a number of able scientists brought some measure of order out of chaos, and were able to discern regular lawful sequence in the apparently erratic sweep of wind currants and storm-eddies. With the rapid advance and settlements to the westward, and construction of railways and telegraph lines, conditions were made favorable for collecting and making a scientific analysis of climatic data. This was done by scores of observers and scientists under the auspices of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, and the Smithsonian Institution, aided in some measure by the government. Upon the foundation thus prepared the structure of the National Weather Bureau was begun in 1870. From a small beginning with an initial expenditure of $20,000, this branch of the public service has been enlarged in its scope until it has become of vital importance to all interests and all classes of people. The annual appropriation for its support is about a million and two hundred thousand dollars, and this great Bureau has won the admiration of the civilized world. Its field of observation now embraces the continent from the Artic circle to the northern coast of South America. And today marine interests, inland commerce and agriculture share about equally the benefits of the service.

It is a Bureau of applied science, with ample provision for original research. It is both progressive and conservative—proving all things and holding fast that which is good. It has been founded upon well-attested scientific principles. All the discoveries and generalizations in meteorology made by the most eminent scientists of America and Europe have been utilized and reduced to practical form in the work of the forecast division. Inventive skill has been called into requisition to construct instruments for recording automatically the most minute changes in atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind velocity and direction, sunshine, etc. These camplex and almost inflallible instruments have been installed at about 200 regular stations within the territory covered by this service, in charge of thoroughly trained observers who have become experts in this line.

(To be continued.)

THE TIRED COWBIRD

DOWNRIGHT LAZY IS THIS BLACK HOBO OF THE ORIOLE TRIBE.

It Builds No Nests of Its Own, but Lays Its Eggs In the Nests of Other Birds and Never Troubles Itself About Rearing Its Young.

The cowbird was born so tired that if he could compel any other bird to gather his food for him he would do so, but he cannot, so he scratches about all day among the herds of cattle and sheep and goes to roost at night in great bands of hundreds of his relatives, always selecting a bushy tree, such as a cypress, for a night's perch. All up and down the Mississippi river valley is the common summer home of these birds, for only in the depth of winter do they retreat to the warmer mesas of Mexico, whither most of the other birds have preceeded them. In the spring following such a winter they are the first to return, filling all the new year air with their chatter and lining the barnyard trees.

You must not think that the glossy black and brown birds so plentiful around southern California barnyards during the winter months are cowbirds, for they are not. They are called "grackles" and seem to be more like crows than blackbirds. You can find their nests, big, bulky affairs, in the orange and cypress trees of almost any of your ranch homes. There are many, many members to the blackbird family, the sweet voiced meadow larks and the gorgeous golden orioles as well as the more sober colored blackbirds and grackles, and of all these but one forces the hatching of her eggs and the feeding of her young on to another bird mother.

In England the cuckoo has this same habit, but the American cuckoo builds her nest and sits on her eggs as nicely as any robin or dove could do. Sometimes our road runner so far forgets herself as to lay her eggs in the nest of a quail or a meadow lark, but not often, but when she does the bird upon whom Mrs. Road Runner tries to impose generally breaks the strange egg or else goes away and leaves the nest alone. Then the field mice and the wood rats have a feast, to which sometimes the road runner comes herself, for she is very fond of eggs as long as they are not her own.

But the cowbird never makes any such poor job as that. She always selects the nest of some smaller bird—in regions where warblers are plentiful the home of one of these little singers is most frequently chosen—and there as many eggs as she thinks the owner of the nest will submit to are laid. Sometimes the warbler goes right on incubating the intruder, but now and [illegible] and dump the egg out on the ground. Nests have been found in which the warblers put a mud floor over the first nest and built another one on top of it, leaving their own eggs to spoil because they knew no other way to rid themselves of the cowbird. If the cowbird comes back by the repaired nest she will put another egg in it, and generally this egg is hatched and raised by the foster pair on whom it has been forced.

It requires about ten or eleven days for the young cowbird to break the shell, while most other birds of its size are two or three days longer, and thus he has a good start on the other nestlings in point of growth. When hatched the cowbird is larger than the sparrow or the warbler and consequently gradually crowds them into the background, taking all the food that should belong to them. As they grow weaker from this he grows stronger, and it is not long until he tips them out of the nest and is sole master of the two old birds, who work ceaselessly to satisfy his awful appetite. In a very few days he gets too large for the little nest and goes out into the branches, where the old birds still continue to feed him in a way they never do their own young after they have left the nest. In Mexico and South America there is a cowbird that sometimes builds a nest of her own and sits upon and hatches her own eggs, but no such thing ever happens among the black hoboes of the oriole family found farther north.

How many eggs a cowbird lays no one knows, but as many as seven have been found in one nest of the oven bird, a kind of thrush found in the eastern states. Usually, however, only one egg is laid in each nest, especially if the birds to whom the nest belongs are small and the nest too little to hold more than one of the cowbird's young in comfort. The parent cowbird never disturbs the eggs of any of the birds in whose nests she leaves her own, knowing full well that if she did so the nest builder would in all probability desert her home or throw the strange egg out. Oftentimes more than one cowbird lays in the same nest, and, as no two eggs of these birds are ever exactly alike in color, you may be sure that no cowbird knows her own egg half a minute after she has laid it.—Los Angeles Times.

Liked Wooden Ships.

Admiral Farragut was a "very old fashioned sailor, with a strong prejudice in favor of wooden ships," says Captain F. S. Hill in his "Twenty Years at Sea." The admiral had gained his victories in such ships and declared himself "too old a dog to learn new tricks." In the Mobile fights his flagship was the wooden ship Hartford, though he was urged to take the new ironclad Tecumseh. It was a noteworthy coincidence that the Tecumseh was the only vessel lost in the battle. She was sunk by a torpedo and went down with her captain and more than a hundred of her crew.

A Mean Husband.

"I think old Kreezus has the queerest way of teasing his wife I ever heard of."

"I thought he was fond of her."

"He is, but he likes to get a joke on her. You know she is sensitive about her age. Well, he has let everybody know that when they were married he gave her a magnificent necklace of diamonds, each diamond representing a year of her age, and he adds one to the string every time she has a birthday. Imagine how the poor woman is torn between her desire to display the necklace and the fear that when she wears it everybody will be counting the diamonds."

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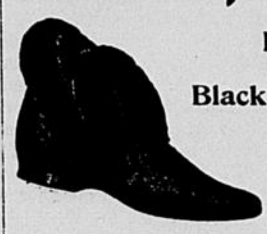

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