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THE SUMMER MONTHS. Are you going to the country on a vacation? If so, it is no trouble for us to forward THE CALL to your address. Do not let it miss you for you will miss it. Orders given to the carrier or left at Business Office will receive prompt attention.

The Alaskan wave of prosperity is good but the Dingley wave is better. The rise in the prices of wheat and wool will bring to this country more gold than forty Klondikes, and we will not have to freeze to death striving for it either.

If a railroad could be opened to the Klondike this summer the rush to get out of the country next winter would give it business enough to pay a boom dividend.

The crusade in the East against the practice of rapid bicycle-riding on the streets is said to have had a good effect already. It seems the scorcher couldn't stand the roasting.

If the restrictive policy of Canada toward the miners of the Klondike should induce them to seek gold on the American side of the line we will have reason to thank her for her folly.

American rails are now being used to construct a Government road in India and all the British manufacturers can do is to furnish a lot of miscellaneous railway against the Government.

The announcement that a mammoth order for shoes has been placed with a St. Louis firm causes Chicago dealers to turn up their noses with scorn. They get mammoth shoe orders every day.

The rise in the price of wheat and the fall in that of silver occurring together constitute a mystery which the Bryanites refuse to consider further than to call it the result of a machination of the devil or Mark Hanna.

A good many papers are opposing the plan of establishing a Government plant for the manufacture of armor-plate, but none of them explain why the Government could not do that as well as run a navy-yard or a gun factory.

It is to be hoped Japan will soon get that new religion she has been seeking so long. There might be something in it which would teach her the wickedness of trying to bully Hawaii and the folly of monkeying with Uncle Sam.

Liliuokalani recently told the Washington people that she has taken up her residence in the city because the climate reminds her of that of Honolulu, and there is reason to believe this is the largest lump of taffy ever given to an American community.

Oklahoma expects to raise 125,000 bales of cotton this year, and some of her enterprising citizens are talking of putting up a factory to work it up for the market. The new community, it will be seen, practices a Southern industry, but pushes it with Northern vigor.

Careful students of the situation in South Africa declare if there is ever a federation of the various States of that country it will be under control of the Boers and not the British, and is more likely to be an independent republic than a part of the Queen's empire.

A strong effort will be made in the East this winter to induce Congress to establish postal savings banks, and it is probable the promoters of the project will at least succeed in getting a bill to that effect introduced and bringing about a debate upon it which will go far toward convincing the public of the importance of the subject.

Boston streetcar companies have given orders to their conductors that in addressing women passengers hereafter the word "madam" shall be used instead of "lady." The innovation is intended to save the ears of the scholarly from the pain of hearing the oft-repeated phrase, "Please move up, lady," which is so offensive to the feeling of a correct bean-eater.

Because the new tariff reads, "No more than \$100 in value of articles purchased abroad by residents of the United States shall be admitted free of duty on their return," some of the New York tourists believe that gifts can be imported free, and there is talk of making a test case of it. It is a slim chance, but to the millionaire duty-shirker any chance is worth trying.

The Italian Government recently desired seven gunboats completed within nine months, and a single firm in Great Britain took the contract and completed the whole job in three months. The fact has attracted considerable attention because it shows how vast is the shipbuilding capacity of Great Britain and how rapidly she can increase her navy whenever she has need to do so.

Governor Hastings of Pennsylvania recently loaned Lehigh University \$150,000 of money belonging to the State in order to help it over a temporary embarrassment, and while the university has no legal claim on the money, every body approves the action. Helping higher education is always popular in this country, and everything which tends to do it is called right when done in the right way, even if there is no law for it.

THE CANADIAN GRAB.

It is not improbable that the Canadian authorities will find sufficient reason before long for reconsidering the recent determination to exact a royalty in the Klondike gold diggings of 10 per cent on the value of gold extracted where it does not exceed \$500 monthly, and 20 per cent where it exceeds that sum, and to retain for the Government every alternate claim throughout the whole gold district. If the reasons for reconsideration are not made apparent at once they will be as soon as the great host of miners now rushing into the country have got fairly to work.

The opposition to the proposed royalties and reservations comes not altogether from Americans. The people of British Columbia object to them as strongly as do the people of the United States. Merchants of Vancouver and settlers in that province desire to see the new gold region opened up as rapidly as possible to trade and traffic, and are by no means favorable to the proposition of the far-off Government in Ottawa. It matters little to British Columbia who develops the diggings of the Klondike. It matters a great deal to her that the promised influx of capital and population shall not be checked.

The News-Advertiser of Vancouver has already given expression to a decided opposition to the course of the Ottawa Government. It sets forth plainly that the policy will require an army of collectors and agents "to keep track of the miners to see that the Government gets its royalty, and even then to make the system effective will involve such close supervision as will almost certainly cause constant irritation and a hostile feeling toward the Government." It adds in conclusion: "As a matter of fact we do not believe the policy can be carried out in practice."

It is the self-evident factuality as well as the injustice of the proposed grab which condemns it. If the Canadian authorities had deliberately set about devising a plan to irritate the miners, delay the upbuilding of British Columbia and developing a serious problem for the Canadian Government to confront they could not have proceeded to those ends more directly than by adopting just such measures as they now propose to enforce.

Men who have sufficient vigor, energy and daring to penetrate into the wilderness of the Yukon will not submit tamely to open injustice. They will resent the Canadian tax and oppose the Canadian claim reservation by every means in their power. There will be many thousands of the miners and they will occupy a country difficult for even the most vigilant police to supervise. Unless therefore Canada is deliberately seeking trouble the Ottawa Government had better reconsider its decision and leave the gold districts open to all who have the courage and the skill to develop them and bring out the precious ore for the benefit of trade and industry in Canada as well as in the rest of the world.

WAR AND EXPLOSIVES.

Hudson Maxim, a brother of the inventor of the famous Maxim guns, and a noted manufacturer of powerful explosives, recently announced before the United Service Institution in London that he believed it is feasible to make a gun capable of shooting a torpedo containing 1420 pounds of picric acid, a species of dynamite, a distance of nearly nine miles, and that such a shell would destroy any vessel in the British navy if exploded either on or in the close neighborhood of her.

Mr. Maxim was formerly engaged with Lieutenant Zilinski in the attempt to invent a pneumatic dynamite gun. This invention was tested by the United States Government and was found partially successful. Maxim is thus thoroughly familiar with the accomplishments and the failures on this line, and he has taken up the work where Zilinski left off.

His new plan does not depend upon compressed air to fire the torpedo, but upon an explosive compound said to be much safer. There is a device to prevent premature explosions by interposing an interior air space between the charge of the fuse and the bursting charge of the shell. The inventor calculates that if the torpedo exploded so small a charge as 500 pounds of an explosive called "Maximite" combined with picric acid within fifty feet of the strongest of modern war vessels the ship would be destroyed, and that if the charge was as much as a ton it would be effectual anywhere within 250 feet.

The cost of a cruiser sufficiently armed with these guns and torpedoes to destroy 200 battle-ships he estimates would be only half a million dollars. For the price of a single one of our great modern war vessels a fleet of ten of these dynamite-shooters could be constructed with an ability to wipe a navy of 2000 ships off the seas.

The idea hitherto has been that such explosives would have to wait for practical use in war until the invention of airships was perfected. The scheme was to get up above the vessel and drop the torpedoes with safety to the airship and death to the water-ship. This thought of course postponed the revolution in methods of warfare to a very indefinite future, but now the possibility seems close upon us.

It will be a glorious consummation if in some way this invention will put out of date the spending of vast sums in national armament, and turn them to use in the arts and peaceful industries.

ELECTRIC CABS.

The Commercial Advertiser of New York gives a very interesting account of the success of electric cabs in that city. The improvement, it seems, has passed far beyond the stage of experiment, for these novel vehicles have been doing a regular twenty-mile-per-day service in conveying people through the crowded streets of the metropolis.

There are a dozen of these cabs and a few barges offered for hire in New York, and they are in constant use. They are maintained, it is said, at about half the expense of a horse for the same amount of work. They cost \$2500, but they are so strongly built at this price that the expense of repairs is very slight. They are operated by a storage-battery system, which will propel a vehicle twenty miles with one charge, and the expectation is to soon perfect them so they will carry thirty-five miles with one supply. They run at any speed from four miles to fifteen per hour, and they can be geared to run at even higher speed if desired. They have the advantage that they can be stopped in one and a half feet length, and can be more accurately guided through the jam of a big city's streets than the most reliable horse.

It is stated that physicians are among the best patrons of this Electric Carriage Company. They find them quick and easy riding and they recommend them, especially to invalids, because the motion is less jerky than in horse-drawn vehicles. The city government has officially recognized the advent of the horseless carriage by passing special ordinances for their regulation.

The Electric Carriage Company expects to enlarge its business until the whole city is supplied with the cabs. They are expected, but not yet proved, because the company is afraid of dissatisfaction among customers from not fully understanding their mechanism. The company, it is reported, makes a continuous study of improvements and expects soon to have a practically perfect vehicle. There seems to be no question of their safety, and in the four months in which they have been in use in New York no accidents of importance have resulted from their employment.

The announcement that Rockefeller will sell his stately new home on the Hudson rather than pay taxes on it is an illustration of the contradictions which exist in the human mind. Rockefeller thinks in one of giving away a million for "philanthropy," but he will not pay his taxes so long as there is a possible means of avoiding it. About the only effective way to deal with such a man is to send him to jail for cheating the Government and then present him with an illuminated wreath of thanks for his generosity to the people.

Calculations made for the purpose of showing how absolutely England is dependent upon the outside world for the necessities of life continue to excite discussion in that country. It appears that the amount spent for wheat and wheat flour used in a year is \$178,000,000, and the portion of this paid for home-grown wheat is only \$27,500,000. This immense quantity of wheat and wheat flour imported is only about one-fifth of the food stuffs which must be brought in from abroad. In 1895 the amount imported was worth \$333,000,000.

It will be seen from this that if the supply of imported food were cut off for as much as two months the poorer classes of England would be starving. Not only would the food supply run short, but the mass of the people could get no money to buy with for the great bulk of the industries of England depend upon imported raw materials.

ENGLAND'S DANGERS.

One of the remedies proposed for this condition of affairs is to offer bounties for wheat, and thus increase the area of cultivation and product. It is said, however, that this would not be an effective remedy, as it would take an addition of seven million acres to raise the needed wheat, and this could not be spared without so reducing the pasture land as to cause a meat famine. Thus it appears it would be impossible for England to supply her population with both meat and bread if her vessels were prevented from freely crossing the seas.

Another plan which has been discussed is to establish immense state granaries in which the surplus wheat which is necessary to withstand a siege could be stored. It is said in objection to this that the quality of the grain would rapidly decline when placed in the warehouses, and furthermore the plan would have the practical effect of making the buying and selling of wheat and consequently the fixing of the price a state function. Such a precedent established in the grain market, it is feared, would soon extend the system to other products and the result would be an economic error of disastrous proportions.

The latest remedy suggested is that the English Government should insure merchant vessels in the event of war. All other proposed remedies would affect only the British Islands, but the wisdom of this last proposal might be discussed in its application to the nation as a whole. The special interest which the question has for England lies in the danger that immediately upon the declaration of war with some powerful nation the rates of marine insurance would go up so high as to make commerce in British ships impossible. State insurance would be a remedy for that to some extent, but here again the objection is urged that it would be Government interference with private trade.

THE COMMERCIAL VERDICT.

The present revival in business is like the boy's snowball—the longer it rolls the bigger it gets. When it began, a couple of months ago, it was but faintly defined. It was limited, in fact, to a slow improvement in provisions, that almost infallible herald of good or hard times. Then gradually—gradually, in fact, that few were aware of what was coming—other lines of goods joined the upward movement. Even then the great majority of people failed to read the writing on the wall. But the sudden jump in wheat opened their eyes. This, in their opinion, was the beginning of the revival. But it had been well under way for some time. Since then other staples, such as hay, hops, dried fruits, hides and leather and in fact almost all prominent articles of farm produce, have sprung into activity, until now the whole range of agricultural products is comprehended in the upward march.

COAST EXCHANGES.

The Hawthorne Bulletin remarks that "whisky is four bits a drink in the United States." A day's wages there (\$15) will buy thirty drinks. A day's wages in Esmeraldas (\$8) will also buy thirty drinks. So what's the use of going to that remote region?

The Los Angeles Express thinks that Prince Henry of Orleans, who is scheduled to fight a "duel" with General Albertone, has an excellent opportunity to make a fortune. Briefly, trade, after four weary years of stagnation, is once more on a sound basis.

The conditions on this coast are familiar to all who keep themselves posted on current events. Everybody knows that wheat is up, that hay and wool and a dozen other important staples are active at profitable prices. To recapitulate them is to retraverse old straw. But in the East new conditions are appearing. There is a brisk demand for American securities in New York on European account, based on our exceptionally fine crop prospects, and the general advance in values throughout the country. This is pouring foreign money into the country at a rapid rate. We are getting richer instead of poorer, and the Europeans have been quick to see and take advantage of it. Hence they are buying our railroad shares to get some of our dividends.

An amusing feature of it all is the disappearance of the calamity howler. His voice is no longer heard in the land. He has taken to the woods. He is a sort of human buzzard that feeds on commercial carnage. His joy is a panic and his delight is in the financial distress of others. When times improve he sinks out of sight, for his occupation is gone. He is deprived of his natural nutriment, and no longer has the toothsome morsel to roll about under his tongue. He gets into cover and waits for the next panic.

True, there are some who refuse to believe that the hard times are over. They fail to see it. They say that business is no better with them. And perhaps they are right. There are still some lines that have not yet got into good running order. But they are in the minority, and their turn will come later on.

No better test of the condition of trade can be made than that of the president of the New York bank who recently sent several hundred letters to bankers, manufacturers and merchants throughout the country asking them for an impartial report on the state of business in their respective localities. Over 75 per cent of the answers reported trade much better, and only about 7 per cent reported it worse. The balance perceived no particular change, but there certainly was no falling back.

This is a pretty good showing and ought to satisfy any reasonable doubter. The letters were addressed to the most important men in their respective cities and towns, and their verdict is not to be doubted. When over 75 per cent of the commercial interests of the country report trade improved it is so.

The principal feature of the local market at present is the tremendous trade in provisions. The merchants say that they never before saw anything like it. The volume of the movement is phenomenal. One heavy house reports that it is selling three times as many goods as ever before in the month of August.

NEWS OF FOREIGN NAVIES.

The screw line-of-battle ship Edgar, built in 1858, for many years regarded a strange bulk, and the ironclad Juanana are to be converted into coal hulks at Portsmouth dockyard.

There are at the present time forty-six vessels of 129,375 tons in course of construction at private shipyards in England for the British navy, and thirty-three vessels of 84,800 tons for foreign navies.

The torpedo-boat destroyer Bat had a trial July 15 at Portsmouth. In six runs over the measured mile the vessel averaged 30.33 knots, and ran one mile at the rate of 32 knots. The horsepower averaged 6199, which enabled her to keep up 4000 revolutions. The steam in the boilers was 230 pounds.

The Spanish navy has been increased during the present year by the addition of ten captains and seventy-two lieutenants. At the present time it consists of 1002 officers, 14,000 men and 715 mechanical and other employees, which include engineers not holding military rank or title.

The Russian Emperor's steam yacht Standart, which was built at Copenhagen, Denmark, very nearly ruined the contractors, as the work was taken at a low price and money advanced for some time, which should be necessary to withstand a siege could be stored. It is said in objection to this that the quality of the grain would rapidly decline when placed in the warehouses, and furthermore the plan would have the practical effect of making the buying and selling of wheat and consequently the fixing of the price a state function. Such a precedent established in the grain market, it is feared, would soon extend the system to other products and the result would be an economic error of disastrous proportions.

An accident occurred to the Teaser, torpedo-boat destroyer, on July 14, while undergoing trials. The boat had been running for two hours, working up to a speed of 27.7 knots, when the engine room broke. The water poured into the after part of the vessel and two compartments were flooded, but the water-tight doors being promptly closed, the Teaser was enabled to return to the yard at Cowes.

Some months ago certain officers from the Russian battle-ship Dimitri Donski were prosecuted and fined at Hongkong for making a boatload of one of the forts, and shortly after another lot of officers from a German mail steamer were charged with a similar offense and fined. The local press took the matter up very vigorously, and when the Dimitri Donski arrived at Singapore she was greeted by one of the Straits settlement newspapers as the "appship," and among the extreme measures proposed it was suggested that she be ordered out of port. Similar officers in Russia are visited with the most severe punishment. Quite recently, however, a British army officer was discovered inside one of the fortifications in Vladivostok, but after being detained for a short time to explain how he got into the fort, he was marched out and cordially invited not to come back and then left severely alone.

The recent loss of the Russian turret-ship Gangout was not from the result of running on rocks, but apparently solely due to bad workmanship on the hull. The Gangout, with other vessels of the squadron, were at target practice in the Gulf of Finland, and at the conclusion of the trial the chief engineer discovered that water was pouring into the ship in great quantities as the water-tight doors were closed, but after keeping afloat six hours the ship sank in over seven fathoms of water. The divers found the ship lying on its port side, and discovered that the outside plating on the starboard bilge had ruptured for a distance of forty feet amidships. The rupture was along the line of rivets, and the distance varied from nine to eighteen inches in width. It is now charged that the vessel was so badly constructed that the firing of the heavy guns caused the rivets and the fissures opened as the practice continued. When the Gangout was launched the ship drew three feet more than intended, and the officer who superintended the construction was dismissed.

It doesn't take the Stockton Independent more than three minutes to mathematically calculate that the rise of wheat to \$1.50 means better times for the farmers of this country.

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NEW TO-DAY.

The thing is to get a library table that's "just right." Right shape and size and design. And that's where we're helpful. More sorts here than you will care to look at in one day.

The picture is only a hint—but it's interesting. Those twisted posts are five inches thick and the polish is as fine as you ever saw. In contrast to the massive woodwork are dainty mother-of-pearl settings in the drawer handles.

And the many others—won't you come and look them over at your ease and pleasure?

This is the store that marks its prices in plain figures.

California Furniture Company Carpets Rugs Mattings

(N. P. Cole & Co.) 117 Geary Street

AN OLD MANSION SOLD.

The Van Rensselaer mansion, which is said to be one of the oldest houses in this country, was sold again Wednesday last. The building stands on the east bank of the Hudson and overlooks the city of Albany.

This continent had been known to the civilized world but 150 years when this ancient building was completed. How old it is can only be surmised, for its early history is not even preserved by tradition. The only record that can be taken as evidence of the date of the building's completion is an inscription on one of the stones that were set to mark up the walls of the foundation. This reads: "K. V. R., 1642 Anno Domini."

According to the most reliable records it was built for the first John Van Rensselaer, who was one of the first Dutch settlers in the city of Albany.

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ATTEMPT TO BRIBE THE SUPREME COURT.

Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court, who was in Kansas City yesterday, told this: "Several years ago a cigar-maker in Washington named Scott got up a brand of cigars which he called the 'Supreme Court.' The labels on the inside of the boxes were pictures of the entire court, and the cigar was a good one. I know this, because one day each of the Justices received two boxes of them with the compliments of Mr. Scott. Nothing was thought of this fact, but the time came when taken as a slight courtesy in return for the use of our pictures. But several weeks later we started prosecuting him, for taking such liberties with our pictures. Scott was frightened and he hit upon the idea of bringing the justices, and I suppose thought he succeeded, for he was never prosecuted, nor had such a thing been thought of."

California has a good wheat crop, like many other States in which that grain is one of the most important products. The Californians are wise enough, in the hour of their abundance, to get their wheat to market as fast as possible, and in the great grange-keeping section of the State there is a veritable blockade which the transportation lines are unable to break.

This means much money and general prosperity for the State which proved true to the Republican party and to common honesty in the crucial campaign of 1896, regardless of the fact that its sympathies were all with the mingling regions of the West and that all its political parties had been more or less committed to the silver heresy. In this case fate is just, for there was no commonwealth in all the land that made a braver or better fight for the honor of the Nation and the safety of society than California did, and no State more thoroughly earned all kinds of good fortune.

May the hills and valleys of California continue to pour out gold and golden grain, fruit and oil and all that its people desire in unfeigned abundance, and may it wax great and flourish accordingly!