

THE MORNING CALL

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GEORGE WILLIAM CHILDS.

The materials for a biography of the late Mr. Childs are superabundant, but they are not always as accurate as they are copious. This criticism will apply even to the volume published a few years ago at Philadelphia.

His working life began when he became a clerk in a bookstore in Philadelphia. He was a fine man, while still very young, part owner of a store and a partner of one of the Petersons who were three in number, all publishers and authors.

There was a time when they were rivals of the Harpers. With them George W. Childs was associated; he married the daughter of one of them, her mother being a Bouvier. The war found him well to do, with a fairly prosperous business. He sold out of the firm, and with his money bought the Ledger, which was a daily with an established position, but a limited income.

It was then that Childs showed what he was in him. He immediately doubled the price of his paper and made every department better than the same department in any other paper in Philadelphia.

He published the best war correspondence, the best commercial articles, the best literary and dramatic criticisms, the best articles on science, art and music, the most scholarly editorials, and, in course of time, the superiority of the Ledger to its rivals became a fact to tell.

He was a Republican in politics and was always a member of the party in good standing, but he never allowed offensive partisanship to show in his paper. He was then that Childs required him to tell the truth, and he never hesitated to do so. He was making a paper for the whole people of Philadelphia regardless of party.

While he laid down for himself this platform of principle, he was keenly alive to the value of personal popularity as an element of business success. He was naturally a kindly, genial man. He never laid himself out to make friends. He gradually won the esteem and affection of the entire body of his fellow-citizens.

Under his control the Ledger for many years acquired such a monopoly of the advertising business of the city that there was little left for its rivals. By degrees the advertisements in the Ledger so completely superseded all other departments in importance that it was possible to relax the vigor Mr. Childs had originally bestowed on them, and the influence of the paper declined as its income increased.

But Mr. Childs was careful to maintain his personal popularity of prestige. He was always doing liberal and generous things. He became the close intimate of President Grant, and paid the chief expenses of his journey round the world. He presented a memorial fountain to Stratford-on-Avon in England.

Another memorial window he put in the church at Bromham in honor of Thomas Moore. He raised a monument over the grave of Edgar Allan Poe. He gave \$5000 for the Childs-Drexel Home for Printers at Colorado Springs. He was one of the chief promoters of the Philadelphia Museum, the Zoological Gardens and the School of Industrial Arts.

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on the Eastern road were \$15,700,000, as against \$17,200,000 for the California corporation. The Pennsylvania road, with a mileage of 2728 miles, earned gross \$69,697,109 at a cost of \$46,061,355 for operating expenses, leaving a net income of \$20,635,754.

The people of the United States paid last year for railroad service \$1,685,685,291 - about three times the average income of the General Government. Railroad traffic is, all things considered, about as safe a gauge of commercial activity as we possess - the first to rise when times brighten, the first to fall when they are clouded.

Twenty years ago the total gross earnings of our railroad system were \$26,000,000, something less than half what they were in 1892-93. But the commerce, industry and production of the country are shown by the census to be fully twice as great as they were in 1872-73.

AN AMERICAN IN AFRICA.

The work of exploring equatorial Africa was sketched by Stanley; the mapping of the country was left to others. One of those who volunteered to undertake a share of it was the American, William Astor Chanler, of the Astor family of New York; his position at the present time gives rise to uneasiness as a dispatch from Zanzibar states that he has been deserted by his men.

The region which he proposed to explore was the neighborhood of Mount Kenia, the snow-clad mountain which towers 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, and two or three hundred miles east of Victoria Lake. From Victoria Lake to the Somali country all is virgin land. It is known that it is densely peopled, that camels and asses abound at the settlements and that the streams are full of hippopotami.

But between the people of this region and Europeans there has never been any intercourse. Exploring and surveying parties on the coast have been repelled by violence. There are a few caravan routes in the northeastern portion over which Arab slave-traders carry Galla girls to the market on the Bab-el-Mandeb; but the map recently published in London to show the paths frequented by the slave-dealers reveals no trace of them in the south.

From Cape Guardafui to the coast and along the line of the equator to the lakes stretches a vast region four times as large as England and Wales of which we know absolutely nothing. Mr. Chanler proposed to establish a base of operations on the flank of Mount Kenia. He started with 125 men in September, 1892, by way of the Tana River, which takes its rise in the slope of Mount Kenia and empties into the Indian Ocean at Formosa Bay.

The next year he spent in exploring the country adjacent to the equator, within sight of Mount Kenia. He found tribes which had never seen a white man, other tribes which were irremediably savages, and could only be approached with arms; others so low on instincts and wild habits that they lived on locusts and wild honey. On September 20, 1893, he wrote to the London Geographical Journal that he was ten miles north of the equator, awaiting a reinforcement of men with supplies from Zanzibar to pursue his task.

He still had at that time his original force of 125 men. This is the last direct news received from him; but the dispatch above referred to states that instead of being re-reinforced, he has lost by desertion the men he had.

It is hardly likely that the Europeans on the coast will permit him to fall for want of a suitable force, especially as he is amply able to pay for them. The month of Tana and a strip of coast north and south thereof in English hands; further south, from Mombasa to Zanzibar, the Germans claim control. Either the two could raise a considerable force of fighting Africans if means were forthcoming to support them.

Thus it is not likely, though it is possible, that we shall presently hear of Chanler's relief expeditions. The ultimate problem which Mr. Chanler and other explorers of eastern equatorial Africa propose to solve is the past history of the races which inhabit that region. There are passages in the history of ancient Egypt and of Palestine which have led to conjectures that in the dark and distant prehistoric days powerful races existed to what we call the Somali country.

How far Ethiopia extended southward we have no means of knowing. It certainly embraced Abyssinia, Mas-sowah and Kassaia the belief that the Queen of Sheba was an Abyssinian princess is still unshaken. If she was, Abyssinia must have enjoyed in her time a civilization higher than it presents to-day.

All through the early history of Egypt incidents reveal a constant pressure from the southeast upon the valley of the Nile, implying the existence in the present Somali country of a civilization hostile to that of Egypt and of aggressive military tribes. It will be the business of Mr. Chanler and of those who assist him in his explorations to ascertain whether any monuments of that civilization survive to the present day.

Executions in public may cease in France after Vallin's fall and drops into the basket. The roads that witness the Place Roquette to witness the guillotine of criminals is always horribly calm, brutal and demoralized. Throughout the night it keeps up orgies of the most revolting indecency, and far from being an example to evil-doers the executions positively operate as an incentive to crime and debauchery, and culprits extract a species of glory from being so conspicuous on the scaffold.

These disgusting details are not to be understood in France, as they are realized in England and in some of our own States, California included. The gross error of the past was in supposing that the sight of a man being hanged would have any effect upon the mind of the criminal.

Curiosity-hunters will perseveringly dig up the imbedded fragments and chemists may take the trouble to analyze portions, but there is little probability of anything new being found out about these erratic visitors from space. In the whirling career of the earth and the whole solar system through space the track of our movement is so immense that we do not draw breath a second time in the same part of the universe. The marvel is we should not encounter it again.

Emperor William of Germany is said to have expressed a wish to visit the United States. If he could only throw aside the red tape which restrains the free movements of all sovereigns and is especially of a strong quality in Germany, he might enjoy a month in America with great profit and enlightenment. There is no

of silver. But the silver problem will not wait half a century for a solution. It is at this day a pressing problem. Gold is rising, silver falling, and commodities falling with silver. The creditor class have the producers and the debtors by the throat. Every year adds to the purchasing power of money, but takes not a mite from the number of dollars a debtor has to pay.

Conclusions that the supply of gold in the earth is about exhausted are decidedly premature. On the Randt workings in the year the yield went on advancing steadily month by month, and the total is actually about \$26,000,000. This is only a small part of the South African field. When the Matabele war is settled many new diggings will be exploited.

The Visala Delta has a San Francisco correspondent who apparently sees footpads at a distance. It is stated that both men and women are engaged in this business and ply it in the daytime as boldly as after dark. The belief is also expressed that the papers here do not tell of one-half the robberies and assaults that take place, the whole truth being really too bad to "make public."

NEWS FROM ABOARD.

The Parnellites are appealing to America for funds to support their cause. A similar appeal has been made by the Nationalists who follow Justin McCarthy's leadership, and considerable sums have been subscribed. The division between these two sections is such that they cannot agree on a common platform.

KEEPING THEIR RECORD CLEAR. A New York Republican paper said before the recent special election that a republican victory in either district would do more to bring the supporters of the Wilson bill to heel. The truth is, however, that the republican victory would do more to exercise their inventive faculties in writing up descriptions of the fair.

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