

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Will the Panama Canal Pay?

AN attempt has been made by Colonel George Earl Church, in the journal of the Royal Geographical Society in London, to show that the Panama Canal will not pay. He begins by asserting that the projected waterway could not hope to gain any of the commerce now passing between Europe, on the one hand, and Asia and Africa on the other. The figures seem conclusive on this point. The distance from the English seaport Plymouth to Yokohama in Japan is 1,725 miles less by Suez than by Panama. Even by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, Plymouth is nearer to Shanghai by 745 miles than it would be by a Panama canal. As regards the trade between Europe and Australia, there is a slight difference in favor of Panama on some of the routes, but this, according to Colonel Church, would be more than counterbalanced by the canal tolls. With reference to the west coast of South America, we are reminded that the most valuable part of its freight traffic comes from the nitrate deposits of Chile. It is, in the first place, uncertain how long the nitrate traffic will last, owing to the doubt concerning the depth of the deposits; and, even as things are now, it is questionable whether the nitrate trade, more than three-fourths of which goes on sailing vessels, would take the Panama route, owing to the fact that an extensive region of calms adjoins the western terminus. The value of the trade of our own Pacific slope is not disputed by Colonel Church, but he believes that the greater part of it will continue to be conveyed across the continent by rail. There is no doubt that our transcontinental railways have superseded the Cape Horn route, which used to employ a huge fleet of clipper-ships, and they have practically absorbed the trade which used to cross the isthmus by the Panama Railroad. In 1839 the traffic between New York and San Francisco via the Panama Railway was valued at \$70,000,000, but ten years later it had shrunk to less than \$5,000,000.—Harper's Weekly.

New Names for Old Vices.

THE tendency of the age is to find excuses; to persuade ourselves that an action which at first sight looks detestably bad is in reality not one which the community ought to punish severely and swiftly, but one for which we should try to find "extenuating circumstances;" to persuade ourselves, in fact, that black is seldom anything more than at worst dark gray, and that in some cases it is white to all intents and purposes. If a financier organizes a gigantic swindle, or a clever woman ruins a hundred men, no vindictive punishment follows; it is decided to be inconvenient to prosecute, or men find themselves laughing that there are still so many fools in the world. If a woman kills her paramour, or a man in a passion stabs a nagging wife, the first thought may be of the rope, but the second is of a petition to the Home Secretary. Last, if the marriage tie is broken—especially in high places—there is an immediate tendency to invest with a mist of romance and pretext finding what is nothing better than weakness and vulgarity. Is the tendency good or bad?

If the people decide that they are only going to hang men and old or ugly women, you come perilously near the doctrine that before a woman commits a murder she must look in the glass. Murder and swindling are ugly words, but no nation has ever been, or ever will be, the better for using pleasanter synonyms for crime.—London Spectator.

Railroad Accidents and Their Causes.

DURING the past year on all the railroads of the United States, 167 persons were killed in railroad accidents (collisions, derailments, boiler explosions, etc.) and 3,586 passengers were injured. During the same period on British roads not a single passenger was killed and only 470 were injured in railroad accidents. It is argued that we have nearly 200,000 miles of track in this country as against 22,000 in Great Britain, it must be answered that the liability to railroad accidents increases with the density of traffic. That is to say, the risks of collision, etc., are greater the greater the number of

trains that pass over a given stretch of line in a given time. Now, here again statistics prove that the density of traffic over English roads is far greater than that over our own, so that when we have taken this into consideration, we find that the difference in safety of travel is even more marked than the mere statement of the relative total number of persons killed and injured would suggest.

Two of the most prolific causes of accident are the use of single track for trains traveling in opposite directions (it was on single track that the recent collision occurred) and that most unreliable system of safeguarding a stopping train by sending back a rear flagman. The first condition we can only hope to remove gradually as the increase in density of traffic warrants the laying of double track; but it is obvious to the most unobservant passenger upon our railroads that, half the time, rear-flag safeguarding is worth very little in protection against rear collisions.

If American railroad men are asked to explain the difference in results between the two countries, they point to the fact that in Great Britain signalmen, and railroad employees generally, remain in the service of the company and at one particular class of work for many consecutive years of service, and, consequently, attain remarkable skill and accuracy. Traffic conditions in Great Britain, moreover, are less variable, whereas in this country the volume of traffic varies greatly with the season of the year, and during the rush attendant on the moving of Western crops, for instance, it is necessary to take on a large number of temporary employes whose services are discontinued when the rush season is over.—Scientific American.

Great Future of Corn.

CORN is the great American crop. Is it to become the world's king of cereals? There is some reason for believing that corn has entered upon a career unexampled heretofore in the history of grain production and consumption. A recent report based on the latest developments in this direction notes the significant change that has come about. Until within a few years Europe had little use for corn, but now is buying and eating it freely. There is so great a demand from all parts of the world that last year's crop, enormous as it was, is likely to be pretty thoroughly consumed. Of course this sustains prices, and the corn grower profits accordingly. The belief is now expressed that the American farmer can never again raise corn enough to congest the market, and that prices are likely to be sustained at a high level. This must stimulate corn production, and there is plenty of ground where it may spread. The "corn belt" is a wide one, extending across the continent, and new methods of cultivation, the utilizing through irrigation of millions of acres now untilled and the increased yield coming from more skillful farming can add enormously to the output.—Troy Times.

More Indians than Ever.

THE removal of 3,000 Choctaws from Mississippi and Louisiana to the Indian Territory, which is now in progress, need inspire no eloquence about red men's wrongs and "palefaces' broken treaties." The treaty breaking was on the other side; these members of the tribe are descended from those who failed to move West in 1830 and they agreed, and they are exchanging a precarious and hard existence for comparative affluence. Our Indians do not now fare badly. Far from dying out, they are increasing in number. The census of 1890 reported 249,000 of them; Secretary Hitchcock's recent report shows an increase to 289,000. Allowing for Indian admixture in men reckoned as whites, there is more Indian blood in the country to-day than when the Pilgrims landed. Then the tribes were decimated by disease and wasted by wars; great tracts of uninhabited forests lay between them, and they could not hold lands so much wider than they used. Now their descendants mainly dwell in compact communities, usually civilized and prosperous.

The rise in value of their lands has made most of the Indians well-to-do, the richest tribes being three or four times as wealthy as the same number of average whites.—New York World.

ESCAPED A SPY'S FATE.

Georgia Congressman Had a Close Call for His Life in War Times.

One of the most popular members of Congress is Representative Livingston, of Georgia, a former Confederate soldier who was thoroughly "reconstructed" soon after the last gun of the conflict had been fired, writes a Washington correspondent. He was telling, in the Appropriations Committee room at the Capitol, the story of his narrow escape from Yankee soldiers during operations at Atlanta. He and a Texas scout were sent on a perilous mission in citizens' clothes. "I knew every path leading to the city and the streets as well as I did the hog paths around my own farm, and General Hardee directed me to ascertain information about the enemy, which I believed I could do from a woman living in the city," said Mr. Livingston.



MR. LIVINGSTON.

"We rode up to the back gate, but to our astonishment the Yankees were in her house. I sprang back into my saddle and we galloped away, the Yankees hot after us. Years afterward, the late General Cogswell, of Massachusetts, and I met here in this committee room, and I happened to learn that he was the military commander at Atlanta at that time. Then I told him my story.

"When I finished telling it General Cogswell put his arm on my shoulder and said:

"Let us be friends through life. I am mighty glad the boys did not catch you. As a soldier, you know what would have been your fate under the circumstances, and we never would have met under such delightful conditions."

"From that day until his death General Cogswell and myself were as fast friends as any two men who ever wore the blue and the gray. I was one of his pallbearers and saw him laid to rest among the people he served so well."

Congressman Livingston comes of

good fighting stock, his grandfather, who was born in Ireland, having served under Washington in the revolutionary war. Before entering public life he followed the pursuits of a farmer and was vice president and president respectively for eleven and four years of the Georgia State Alliance. For many years he has been a power in the Democratic politics of Georgia. He was elected to the Fifty-second Congress and has sat in that body ever since.

THE OLD WOOD FIRE.

How It Was Built and Kept Alive by an Expert.

After the evening chores were done my father would appear in the doorway with the big black log coated with snow, often of ampler girth than himself, and fully breast-high to him as he held it upright, canting in one way and another, and walking it before him on its wedge-shaped end. He would perhaps stand it against the chimney while he took a breathing spell and planned his campaign. Then, the androns hauled forward on the hearth, and the bed of half-burnt brands and live coals raked open, the log was walked into the chimney, where a skillful turn would lay it over, hissing and steaming, in its lair of hot embers, says a writer in the Atlantic Monthly. It seemed a thing alive, and its vehement sputtering and protesting made a dramatic moment for at least one small spectator. The stout shovel and tongs, or, perhaps, a piece of firewood used as a lever, would force it against the chimney-back; then a good-sized stick, called a "back-stick," was laid on top of it, and the androns were set in place. Across the androns another good-sized stick was laid, called a "fore-stick," and in the interspace smaller sticks were crossed and thrust and piled, all quickly kindled by the live coals and brands. In very cold weather a fire was kept burning all night, our father getting up once or twice to replenish it. Even in summer the coals rarely became extinct. A good heap of them, covered with embers at bedtime, would be found alive when raked open in the morning.

We don't believe we ever knew any one who was not all right in theory.

SAGE DROVE BARGAIN.

Then Made Neighbor Pay for Ride in Work of Hired Man.

Russell Sage has not squandered very much on clothes and personal luxuries during his long life, still he has spent some pretty large sums on horses, his love of which has amounted to almost a passion. Some time ago he paid \$10,000 for a team of trotters for use at his country place on Long Island, and the first time he was to drive them he asked Frank Tilford, who was a neighbor of his, to go with him. How Uncle Russell made the round Tilford pay for his outing is still told with great glee throughout the countryside.

After driving a little way a team was seen approaching drawing a load of salt hay out from the meadows along the shore. Immediately said Sage:

"I am paying too much money for bedding for my horses. Now we'll see what this man wants for his load of hay."

So the stranger was stopped and the aged financier began negotiations.

"What do you want for that load of hay?"

"Five dollars," was the reply.

"Five dollars?" said Sage. "Why, it is not worth a cent more than three. It does not cost you anything; all you have to do is to cut it."

"Well," replied the farmer, "it takes a good half day's work, and the use of my horses and wagon."

But Sage would not pay \$5, so a compromise was made for \$4 for the load delivered.

"Where shall I leave it?" said the farmer.

"At Frank Tilford's," said Uncle Russell, and, turning to Tilford, as they drove on, he said:

"You see, Frank, if he knew that hay was for Russell Sage he would not let it go for less than \$7. And, by the way, when he leaves it at your place, just let your man bring it over to my barn."—Mail and Express.

The School for Scandal.

Look at the crowd of women going into Mrs. Gabbie's house. What's the attraction?"

"Detraction. The sewing circle meets there to-day."—Philadelphia Press.

OWLS THAT LIVE IN THE GROUND.



BIRDS make all kinds of curious nests; still, surprising as some of them are, they are generally alike in one thing, and that is that they are suspended in the air in some manner. But Florida has a bird that digs its nest deep in the ground. It is the little Florida burrowing owl, called by the neat and dainty name of "Speotyto cunicularia floridana" by scientists, who love to find names like that for the beasts and birds and fishes of the country.

The burrowing owl does not live underground because it is too stupid to build a nest above ground. It is a very wise little bird—much wiser than most of its feathered relatives—and its knowing appearance is fully borne out by its brain. The owl burrows because it prefers to live that way. The birds dwell together in large colonies. Thus their homes form real bird cities. They prefer an open prairie land for the site of the settlement. Having selected the location, they pitch in suddenly some night, and by the time dawn comes the town is open for business, each house furnished and all the inhabitants snoring comfortably from four to eight feet underground.

Like the prairie owls in the West, that also live in burrows, the Florida owls are as quick as a wink in diving into the holes of their gloomy homes on the first sign of danger.

THE OVERWORKED ENGINEER.

Loss of Sleep Is Said to Cause Many Railroad Accidents.

The country has been repeatedly shocked of late by reports of railroad horrors. The disasters are ascribed now to defective signals, again to carelessness on the part of the man who runs the train or the fellow who gives the orders, and various other more or less plausible theories are brought forward. The public accepts most of the explanations given by the companies, but experienced railroad men shake their heads and say that the real cause is overwork. Seven days in the week and many hours each day the railway man must toil. Tradesmen, artisans, workers in nearly every other field lay aside their labors one

rest. With work to do, however, extra pay to earn, and urgent necessity commanding that the work be done, the men assert that they do not feel at liberty to take for sleep the time which the companies think should be spent in moving freight. Some assert that, discharged, on one pretext or another, have followed refusals to do extra work.

Passenger engineers are comparatively free from calls for this extra and dangerous work. Their runs are scheduled. Unless the unusual happens they know to a certainty when their work begins and when it ends. It is the man on the "chain gang," the man who comes in from one trip to find another waiting him, who finds his day's work including the greater part of the twenty-four hours.

Recent developments in the railroad



MAN AT THE THROTTLE ALWAYS UNDER A TERRIBLE STRAIN.

world have increased the hard work for the engine crews. Mogul engines make a greater strain on the engineer. Their firing is a much more laborious task for the fireman. Business has increased more rapidly than the equipment of the roads. There is scarcity of men to do the work. All these conditions add to the hardships of the freight engineer.

A fireman relates that his engineer frequently has gone to sleep on his seat from exhaustion while the train was running at thirty miles an hour, and that he has awakened him in time to make the stops at stations. He says that he has left his engineer sleeping in a station while he ran the train back for water for which the man had forgotten to stop.

A railroad man says: "After a man has been under the strain for thirty hours his eyes may remain open, but he doesn't realize what he is doing, and it is not at all strange that men sometimes make mistakes under those circumstances. They may lay the wrecks to fogs and bad weather and a dozen other causes, but I am convinced that two-thirds of the wrecks which occur are caused by men who from want of sleep are unfit to work."

A museum curiosity is a man who can talk faster than his wife.

SHEAR NONSENSE

"I see the new magazine is out?" "Yes; and thank heaven, they've got my poem right next to advertising matter."—Atlanta Constitution.

"Dis is certainly fine, braicin' weather," remarked Weary Raggles to Tired Tatters. "Yes," replied Tatters; "I braced six men for a dime dis mornin' an' on'y got one refusal."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

A man with an unusually large mouth has the habit of opening it on some occasions very wide. His dentist the other day administered a mild rebuke: "Not so wide, please; I prefer to stand outside and work."

Summed Up: The Widow—I want a man to do odd jobs about the house, run on errands, one that never answers back, and is always ready to do my bidding. Applicant—You're looking for husband, ma'am.—New York Life.

A Natural Question: "Have you any two-cent stamps?" inquired the victim, after paying his bill at the Bong Tong Hotel. "I think so," replied the clerk; "how many do you want?" "How much are they apiece?"—Philadelphia Press.

"These Americans," cries the affrighted Tagal, "are cannibals." "Whatever gave you such an idea?" asks the Moro. "I just heard one of those soldiers ask that pretty school teacher to come and eat a Filipino with him."—What-to-Eat.

"Are they fond of their New York home?" "Oh, awfully fond. They spend their winters in Florida, their springs in Lakewood, their summers at Newport, and their autumns at Lenox, but they are simply devoted to their New York home!"—Exchange.

Convinced: "Do you read Dickens?" "No," said Mrs. Cumrox, rather loftily. "Perhaps you are one of those who do not regard him as representing the best literature?" "I am. I have seen his books offered for sale as cheap as 25 cents a copy."—Washington Star.

Very Unromantic: "They had one of the strangest marriages recorded for a long time." "In what respect?" "In every respect. Why, both parents on both sides were present, there was nothing sudden or secret about it, and their own clergyman performed the ceremony."—Judge.

The Lesser Evil: "Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins. "I hope you will never conceal it from me when you bet on a horse race." "Won't you be angry if I lose?" "Not as angry as I would be if you were to win and not let me know about it."—Washington Evening Star.

Mrs. Bizzy—I am so sorry to hear that your wife has been throwing the crockery at you again, Casey. Where did she hit you? Casey—Falth, ma'am! That's what O! do be after complainin' av. 'Twas a whole set av dishes broke to pieces, an' she nivir hit me wanst.—Brooklyn Life.

"You have just as much right and, theoretically, just as good a chance as anybody else to be President," says the patriotic citizen to his neighbor. "I cannot agree with you," sighs the neighbor; "we have no children, and that fact alone would lose me the photographer's vote."—Judge.

Miss Mainchantz—I suppose you've heard of my engagement to Mr. Jenks. Miss Ascott—Yes, and I confess I was surprised. You told me once that you wouldn't marry him for a million dollars. Miss Mainchantz—I know, dear, but I discovered later that he had two millions.—Philadelphia Press.

Wished to be Prepared: "I'm hungry, sir," said the beggar; "won't you give me enough to get a meal?" "Here, my good man," said Mr. Pompus, "here's a penny for you." "Oh, thank you, sir. By the way, have you got a peppermint tablet about you? I always get dyspepsia when I overeat myself."—Tit-Bits.

Showed What She Could Do: Phoxy—I got a good square meal last night, the first in several weeks, and I have you to thank for it. Friend—Me to thank? Well, that's news to me. Phoxy—Yes, I know. I telephoned to my wife yesterday that you were coming out to dinner with me.—Philadelphia Press.

Selected Names: First Matinee Girl—That woman looks like an actress. Do you know what her name is? Second Matinee Girl—She was a Miss Ethel Johnson before she married George Billings, whose stage name is Alfred de Vere, but she is known professionally as Euphemia Frothingham.—Brooklyn Life.

Feminine Progression: "First she wondered if any man was really worthy of her." "Yes." "Then she wondered which man was the most worthy of her." "Yes." "Then she wondered which of several worthy men she had refused would come back to her." "Yes." "And then she began to wonder what man she could get."—Tit-Bits.

He was wandering in Ireland, and came upon a couple of men "in holts" rolling on the road. The man on top was pomeling the other within an inch of his life. The traveler intervened. "It's an infernal shame to strike a man when he's down," said he. "If you knew all the trouble I had to get him down," was the reply, "you wouldn't be talking like that."—Sporting Times.