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EGOISM THE MEASURE OF OUR INTEREST.

It might almost be laid down as a law of psychology that a man's interest in a given event varies in inverse ratio with the square of the distance, says the San Francisco Bulletin. This law is somewhat complicated, by the fact that all events are not all of intrinsic interest. A burglary committed next door to one's home is a great event, a burglary committed two blocks away is something to remark when one reads of it in the paper, but a burglary committed on the other side of town or across the bay is nothing at all. One reads of it without the slightest interest. But a tripple murder committed a mile away, in circumstances of shocking brutality or horrifying premeditation, quite overshadows a petty larceny next door.

The sense of local interest is very strong. A man will give up his life to save the lives of twenty persons in a building burning across the street, but what man in San Francisco would consent to die, as a sort of placatory sacrificial victim, in order to prevent a war between Japan and Russia; a war in which thousands of men are sure to lose their lives?

When the Baldwin hotel in this city was destroyed by fire it was a tremendous event in the city, and people here talked about it for months, although only a few perished in that event. But if a similar hotel were to be burned in Chicago, or New York, little concern would be felt in San Francisco. A column in the newspapers would sate our curiosity about it. We would glance down the column and then turn listlessly to the sporting pages or to the society gossip.

When the roof of the glass works caved in during the football game a few years ago, and a number of people were precipitated into the cauldron of boiling glass, what excitement there was throughout the city! The papers printed pages and pages of the thrilling details. Pictures of all the dead and injured, and of all their surviving relatives within the third degree of kindred, were published. The other day fire broke out in an eastern coal mine and many more persons were killed than lost their lives in the glass works disaster; yet the San Francisco newspapers did not make a great deal of the affair. The editors were aware that the people here were not greatly concerned about the loss of two or three hundred lives in Pennsylvania.

Why does the distance make such a difference in an event? Are human lives not as precious in Pennsylvania as in San Francisco? Is not a hotel in Chicago as valuable as one in San Francisco? Is a burglary committed around the corner, in a house whose occupants we do not know, more important intrinsically than a burglary committed in Oakland or New York, or Berlin, or Calcutta?

This preference of the near event over the far event springs from the ineradicable egoism of human nature. Each man views himself as the center of the cosmos, the exact middle term in the long series of life, the culminating product of evolution. We measure all men and all things by their position with relation to ourselves. The past is the time that elapsed before we came, the future is the time that shall come after our departure. Consequently events gain importance by propinquity to ourselves, either in time or in distance, and diminish rapidly, as in a perspective, as they become more and more remote. The man who is so fortunately situated as to live in the house adjoining ours is therefore magnified. The poor wight whom destiny has cast in our antipodes is a mere impersonal unit of population. If he is killed in a fire or a war we do not care to know his name or anything about him. Suffice it that the dispatches say twenty guests lost their lives in a burning hotel, or the Russians lost one hundred privates and two officers.

Our interest in events, moreover, depends but slightly upon the intrinsic importance. Nothing could be much more important to the people than a detailed report of a committee engaged in framing a tariff bill, yet the report of the proceedings in a scandalous divorce trial would be read with a keener relish by nine persons out of ten than the report of

the tariff bill. The personal is more interesting than the impersonal, just as the near is more interesting than the remote for reasons flowing from the deep springs of egoism.

BRITISH POLITICS.

The tariff campaign now on in England entails much bitterness, and in the fiery discussions things are called by their right names. Reynolds' Newspaper, a weekly publication of large circulation, sees no particular reason why England should put herself out for the benefit of those "independent states ironically called colonies," and cites, as an instance of England's lack of control of them, the fact that British hatters were refused landing in Australia on the ground that they were coming into the country under contract, which is prohibited by the Australian law. "So independent of the 'empire,' as the monarchy of Great Britain and Ireland is most improperly called, are these allied states, namely the Canadian dominion, the commonwealth of Australasia and Publican Seddon's tight little island New Zealand, which, like the Transvaal and Orange Colony, we stole from the Dutch, that they refuse to contribute to the commerce of defense," Reynolds' Newspaper adds. It is for those selfish strangers, the paper avers, that Chamberlain seeks to foist his food tax upon England and Ireland.

Nor does Reynolds' hesitate to score Chamberlain for his past alleged misdeeds. "The food tax since then (1885) has been greatly increased," it continues, "and Chamberlain has added another 9,000,000 pounds sterling yearly to the burden as payment for his disastrous and unsuccessful war in South Africa. His son, Austen, jobbed into the office of chancellor of the exchequer, for which he is about as much fitted as a 20-shillings-a-week clerk, has publicly stated that he does not intend to remit any of this war tax on the people's food; that it is to remain a permanent burden; that it is to be the price of Maffeking; but that he intends to make a further reduction of the war tax on the income of the wealthy and of the middle classes! Austen has declared that he follows his father as a food-taxer and he remains in the cabinet instead of following Jeremy Diddler into retirement."

And so the campaign goes. For out-and-out strenuousness those British cousins of ours make us look like rank amateurs.

SUPREME COURT SECRETS.

The supreme court of the United States has long been bothered by prying speculators who seek to know, in advance, what its decisions will be in important cases, so that they may take advantage of their effect in prices, says the Tacoma Ledger. All sorts of devices are resorted to to get advance information. To know what the decision will be in an important case, even a few minutes before it is announced, is often worth a great deal of money. Eminent lawyers have been known to try to turn their acquaintance with the justices to advantage in this way, but so far as known or suspected none ever succeeded. In one notable case, when the famous new Alamaden Quicksilver mining case was to be decided, and after the justice who had prepared the opinion had begun to read it, a United States senator went to the justice who sat at the end of the line and in a whisper told him that he was obliged to leave the city at once and urged to be informed what the conclusion of the opinion was. He did not get the information he sought.

Now that the Northern Pacific-Great Northern merger case has been submitted, the usual-unusual effort is being made to get advance news of what the decision will be. Such news would be worth many millions in Wall street, for it would enable those who had it practically to rob the owners of the stock who didn't have it. There is not much danger that anybody will get it, though in order to prevent their getting it absolutely some one of the nine justices will have to do a lot of work with a pen that he would ordinarily do with the aid of a stenographer and a typewriter.

Of course this justice, and in fact all the members of the court, have a grand opportunity to make sure money in large sums by taking advantage of the information in a case like this, that they alone have. But no member of the court has ever done this. It may be confidently believed that none ever will. He could not do it with safety if he would, and would not if he could.

It is noteworthy that while American products are constantly making headway in Asia, Africa and other quarters of the globe outside of Europe, over two-thirds of our merchandise exports in 1903 went to European countries. Out of a total of \$1,500,000,000 of exports from the United States last year Europe took nearly \$1,100,000,000. It is hardly surprising, in the light of such figures, that there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among our European rivals over the American invasion of home markets and that all sorts of devices and schemes are projected in order to "meet American competition." And the exasperating thing is that Europe dare not shut out many of our exports absolutely, for to do so would be a direct invitation to domestic riot and insurrection.

Says the Mines Are Valueless

Boston Man Wants Big Money Back From an Alleged Mine Promoter;

Seattle, Feb. 4.—William F. Tudor, of Boston, alleges that William M. Edner induced him to invest \$71,765.50 in stock of four Alaska mines which have proved valueless. He alleges that Edner knew that the stock was worthless when he sold it and has filed action against that individual in the superior court to recover the amount named.

The plaintiff alleges that he was induced to invest his money by representations that the stock of the mines in question was selling in the open market at the rate which he paid. He says further that he was told that a vast amount of development work had been done upon each of the mines and that large quantities of valuable ore was in sight; that he was shown samples of what purported to be ore from the

mines, and that these showed high assays. He alleges that after freely investing his money on faith he investigated his holdings and learned that all the material statements regarding them were false.

There are four causes of action, each stated in the same terms, but alleging the payment of different amounts, ranging from \$5000 to \$40,000. Mr. Tudor does not state whether he attempted to acquire any information regarding the properties from anybody but the defendant.

New York, Feb. 3.—Captain G. Cornwall, commander until recently of the United States cruiser Chicago, is dead at his home in Scarsdale.

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7:45 a m	For Portland and	11:30 a m
6:10 p m	Way Points	10:30 p m

SEASIDE DIVISION		
8:15 a m	Astoria for Warren-	7:40 a m
11:35 a m	ton, Flavel Fort	4:00 p m
5:50 p m	Stevens, Hammond	10:45 a m
	and Seaside	
6:15 a m	Seaside for War-	12:50 p m
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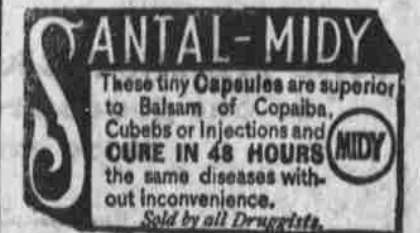
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