

EDITORIAL COMMENT AND TIMELY TOPICS

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GOSSIP ABOUT WOMEN

The Sultan has warned Mrs. Christich, mother of Milan, son of the late King Milan of Serbia, to guard her son carefully. She is advised to keep him in the house and not allow him to appear on the streets. It is presumed that this advice was given for fear an attempt might be made to murder young Milan, although it is not believed there will ever be any prospect of his succeeding to the throne of Serbia.

Mme. Loubet, wife of the French President, believes in co-education. Recently at a society of French mothers she brought down upon herself severe criticism by advocating American methods in training girls.

Having won the degree of master of arts at the New York University, after a three years' course of study, Mrs. Charles H. Truax, wife of Judge Truax, will begin active work in a philanthropic society that will look after poor nebrinates.

Charles Dickens' advice to women: "Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts."

Lady Glenworth, an Englishwoman who distinctly remembers seeing the guards march off on their way to Waterloo, celebrated her one hundredth birthday recently. She has borne her present title for 68 years.

VICTORIA CROSS.

January 29 is the anniversary of the institution of the soldier's most precious decoration—perhaps the most precious decoration in the world—the Victoria cross, for it was instituted by her majesty, the late Queen Victoria, on the 29th day of January, 1856, and so is not quite 50 years old. While it is the most prized of all the decorations and orders an Englishman can win, it is also the most democratic decoration in the world. Although it is the official badge of an actual personal courage and daring, it has no concern with rank, long service or wounds, and it may be worn by one who has been only a few months, or even weeks, in the army, while others who have spent their lives in the service and gained rank and other decorations may not possess it.

It may be worn by a private soldier or a field marshal, and on the roll of the heroes' names are to be found almost every rank in both the services, for the winning of the cross is possible to any one, as it was granted "as a reward for conspicuous bravery or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy," or, as the inscription upon it records, "For Valor."

The Victoria cross had its birth during the Crimean war, when Queen Victoria felt that some recognition of the personal daring and heroism of her soldiers in that terrible struggle was needed. The royal warrant clearly lay down the conditions under which the cross may be won, but the whole of them may be summarized in the one sentence, "For conspicuous bravery or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy."

There are not many who are unfamiliar with the appearance of the cross, but for the benefit of those who have only seen it in photographs or pictures, it may be said that it is about an inch and a half wide and has in the obverse center a crowned lion, underneath which is an scroll bearing the words, "For Valor." It is attached to a bar on which is a spray of laurel leaves and is suspended by a broad ribbon, which is blue for the naval service and dark red for the military. Both the cross and the bar are made from bronze which formerly formed part of some of the Russian guns captured during the Crimean war and complete with the ribbon and pin weighs just under an ounce, or 432 grains, to be exact. It is engraved with the name and regiment of the recipient, as well as the date on which he won it, and as soon as this is done it is dispatched from the makers to the sovereign to bestow upon the hero.—St. James Gazette.

THE LONGEST WAY AROUND.

The storms in May in the West did great injury to the telegraph wires, but the daily papers came out each morning with the news of the world, and few people outside of the telegraph and newspaper offices knew how it was done or appreciated the expedients devised to get the messages through.

One night the wires were down between Omaha and Council Bluffs, just across the river. An electric light tower had been blown down upon them. All telegraphic communication with Omaha was cut off, but the messages came as usual and almost as quickly.

But they did a lot of traveling to get across the river. First they were telegraphed from Chicago to St. Louis, then to Kansas City, from Kansas City to Denver, and from Denver back to Omaha, making a distance of 2,000 miles to get across the Missouri River. This might have been shortened if the wires between Omaha and Kansas City had not been down also.

Recently the connection between Denver and San Francisco was broken. Dispatches were sent out from Chicago as usual, but could get no farther than Denver. There could be no question of their lying over a day or two. They simply had to go through. And they went, but by a roundabout way.

First they were sent back East, via Kansas City to St. Louis, and from there telegraphed down to El Paso, where they got on the Southern Pacific system and reached San Francisco by the way of Los Angeles. They traveled 2,000 miles out of the way to get there, but the morning papers had all the news the next morning.

The operators at Sioux City got a wire to St. Paul, Minn., and from there the dispatches ran down to Chicago and thence back to Omaha. In this case it certainly was an illustration of the proverb, "The longest way round is the shortest way home."

RAT STORY FROM MANILA.

When the United States military transport Sherman arrived at Manila recently she was, as is the case with most other ships that arrive from or touch at Hong Kong on the way to Manila, detained for inspection to see if she had any rats on board. When the big transport dropped anchor in Manila Bay, therefore, the official rat inspector went on board to see what was doing in the way of rodents. In less than 15 minutes he hurriedly left the ship, and, going ashore, reported that there was on board the Sherman, according to the patent rat enumerator in use at Manila, no fewer than 954,000 rats.

The Sherman was immediately ordered to the quarantine station at Mariveles, as no ship on which the disease-carrying rodents are found is allowed to dock at Manila until they are exterminated. Accordingly the Sherman steamed back to Mariveles. When she arrived there her hatch had been opened up and enough sulphur carried below to kill millions of rats. As soon as the anchor was dropped the sulphur fires were started in the hold, and in a few minutes the work of the fumes became apparent.

Out of the hatches there poured such a stream of rats as was never before seen in the Orient. First by the hundreds, and then by the thousands, they appeared at the hatches, and then leaped into the water. Every one tried to swim ashore, but the distance was far too great for any rat to swim, and soon the great black line of paddling rodents began to thin out. Some of them reached a point about 300 yards off the ship, but none got any farther. After the fumes had been working for about an hour the rats stopped appearing. An inspection of the ship was made and not a rat discovered. The Sherman then re-entered Manila and discharged her cargo.—Manila American.

THE BARTENDER GETTING EVEN.

Since the bar is a necessary evil—to some folk—and is an institution of the state—being licensed—reference to it occasionally must be excused. There are some very clever men behind the bar, and once in a while a gentleman. Tab is usually kept on him by the metal cash register. He feels that he is watched at all hours by a maze of patented machinery. If he steals a check of 15 cents he is caught, you may say. Not at all! The other day in a fashionable resort the proprietor, a big-bellied and pompous man, "called down" one of his men before some customers. As to the question of right or wrong I say nothing. But presently, when Signor Pomposity turned his back, the barman emptied a full bottle of the finest whiskey into the washing trough under the bar. It was worth at least \$1.50. That was his way of getting even. I am informed that it is the usual way of resenting an insult from the proprietor. The mere stealing of 15 cents is a small matter, when the barman is to be trusted with thousands of dollars' worth of liquors. If a man is not to be trusted with change, how is he to be trusted with liquors?—New York Press.

WILLING TO TAKE CHANCES.

Zangwill, the Jewish novelist, was in early life extremely poor. It is said of him that when he was a little fellow of not more than eight or nine years, he called on a builder and asked for a place as driver of a horse and cart.

The builder looked down at him. "Why, laddie," he said, "you couldn't drive a horse and cart."

"Why not sir?" asked Zangwill.

"Because you are so little. The horse would tread on you."

"Would he?" said the boy. "Well, he'd have to get in the cart first."

THE PRESIDENT'S LIMITATIONS.

Mr. Roosevelt delights the crowd that gathers around his car; he "says an undisputed thing in such a solemn way," and his manner gives the impression of a man who is sturdily fighting his way through great obstacles to a clearly defined and lofty goal. But sound judgment and clear thinking and comprehension of public questions are not conspicuous elements of his personality.—Philadelphia Record.

In his recent brochure on Zola, M. Fague of the Academie Francaise, says: "Zola began to write too soon. Every man who writes before he is 30 and who does not devote the golden age of his life—from the twentieth year to the thirtieth—to reading, observing and thinking, without writing a line, runs the risk of having no brain and of being but a journeyman author. There are some exceptions, but they are rare."

MYSTERY IN WOMAN'S AGE

Is it necessary for a woman to tell her age? A variety of opinions exist regarding this delicate subject.

"I don't think there is a particle of necessity for a woman's telling her age," says one woman, adding, "but it is equally useless for her not to tell it. There is always some one who knows it, and, therefore, if you attempt to prevaricate you are certain to be found out."

There is no reason, however, why a woman should go on the house-top and proclaim to the world that she is 50 and glad of it. Don't do it, and don't think you are old. No one nowadays is old. It is unfashionable.

The favorite sticking age for woman is 25. This is proved by the fact that the number of women returning themselves as between 20 and 25 is far larger than the number of girls returned 10 years before as between 10 and 15. The former must naturally be the survivors of the latter. Here is a little mystery of which the solution must be found in the intricate mass of a woman's vanity.

The present King of England, when Prince of Wales, once asked a pretty woman her age. She replied:

"Just 25."

Five years later he met her again and asked the same question.

"Just 25," she again replied.

The Prince smiled and said:

"Five years ago you made the same answer."

"Ah, your highness," was the rejoinder, "surely you don't think I am a woman who says one thing today and another thing tomorrow!"

She was quite right. Twenty-five is a very proper age at which to remain.

There is no reason why a woman should be obliged to tell her age in court. If she is wise, she will not.

"And what is your age, madam?" was the attorney's question.

"My own," she answered promptly.

"I understand that, madam; I mean how old are you?"

"I am not old, sir," with indignation.

"I beg your pardon, madam, I mean how many years have you passed?"

"None; the years have passed me."

"How many of them have passed you?"

"All; I have never heard of their stopping."

"Madam, you must answer my question: I want to know your age."

"I don't know that the acquaintance is desired by the other side."

"I don't see why you insist upon refusing to answer my question," said the attorney, coaxingly. "I am sure I would tell you how old I was if I were asked."

"But nobody would ask you, for everybody knows you are old enough to know better than to be asking a woman her age."

And the attorney passed on to the next question.

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The objection made by women to letting their age be known is not approved by the ladies of Japan, who actually display their cycle of years by the way in which they arrange their hair.

Girls from 9 to 15 wear their hair interlaced with red crepe in a semi-circle around the head, the forehead being left free, with a curl at each side. From the ages of 15 to 30 the hair is dressed very high on the forehead and gathered up at the back in the shape of a butterfly or fan, with twistings of silver cord, and perhaps a decoration of colored balls.

Beyond the milestone of 30, a woman twists her hair around a shell pin, placed horizontally at the back of the head. Quite differently, again, a widow arranges her coiffure, and the initiated are able to tell at a glance whether or not she desires to marry again.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

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BRISTOW FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.

It is rather an adroit suggestion that General Bristow, who is conducting the postoffice investigation, should be made Roosevelt's running mate in 1904. Such a nominee for Vice-President would be in the nature of a guarantee to the country that Roosevelt's second term, in case of his re-election, would be free from the scandals which have been so serious a blot upon his first term. In the eyes of the general public Bristow is the exponent of unrelenting pursuit and exposure of official wrongdoers, and his nomination, if he should be placed on the ticket, would be made with the view of removing the unpleasant impressions which have resulted from recent disclosures of corruption, and for the purpose of catching the votes of the reform element.

But even the suggestion that Bristow may be placed on the Republican ticket with Roosevelt is an admission of the straits to which the latter has been reduced by the amazing revelations of the postal investigation. There can be no question that the President's prospects of another term have been seriously jeopardized, and though he is still without a competitor for the nomination, his friends and supporters are waiting with ill-concealed anxiety for further developments in the postal scandal. They realize that if the investigation is pressed to the uttermost, prominent Republicans will inevitably become involved with the almost certain result that they will in revenge inaugurate a strong movement hostile to the President's candidacy. On the other hand it will be suicidal for President Roosevelt to stifle or curtail the investigation, for public interest is so strongly aroused that such a course would at once arouse distrust and disapproval.

When the postoffice scandal began to develop, Postmaster-General Payne adopted the policy of belittling and ridiculing it. That policy brought "humiliation and embarrassment" upon the administration, to quote the words of Secretary of State Hay. The President and his advisers are now keenly alive to Payne's blunder, and the inspired suggestion of Bristow as the Vice-Presidential nominee is indicative of the latest attitude of the administration in this matter. While probably only a "feeler" to gauge the public pulse, it seems to foreshadow a resolve on the part of the President to make his campaign as a reformer, and to appeal to the people as the champion of civil service principles in the government service.

Just so long, however, as the President retains Mr. Payne as the head of the Postoffice Department, the public will look with doubt and suspicion upon the investigation which is in progress. When Payne has been forced to resign, some measure of public confidence may be restored. In the meantime, the judgment of the people will be suspended.

MAKE THE RULE GENERAL.

The United States Treasury Department has unofficially intimated that in future employees of the department will not be permitted to engage in outside business. The reason given is that such outside employment must of necessity interfere with the efficiency of the service rendered to the government, beside being a frequent occasion for scandal and for malfeasance.

The rule is a commendable one, provided it is enforced in all departments of the government service. It should not be limited to the Treasury Department alone. The people of Oregon have long had an example in United States Marshal W. F. Matthews, of the evil consequences of permitting a federal official to devote a large part of his time to business utterly unconnected with his office. If it is proper that a treasury employee should devote all of his time to the duties of his position, it is equally important that a

United States Marshal should pursue the same course. "Jack" Matthews is one of the most notorious machine politicians that has ever cursed the state. His time is chiefly occupied in spoils-grabbing and in crooked politics. Despite the boasted civil service principles which are supposed to keep federal office-holders out of politics, he is the chairman of the Republican state central committee (his pretended resignation being a mere sham) and he is the acknowledged boss of the party in Multnomah County. He attempts to dictate every appointment in the city and county service and has but just emerged from an unsuccessful struggle to gain control of the Port of Portland Commission. He controls the Republican County Committee and is even now fighting to retain his hold upon that body. He has been the friend and abettor of the boodlers who have looted the taxpayers of this county and he is now engaged in an effort to debauch the fire and police departments of this city by making them mere adjuncts to his own machine.

Jack Matthews is subsisting off the people of Multnomah County. His position as United States Marshal being a mere side issue, an incidental source of income without involving any very serious tax upon his time.

The rule announced by the Treasury Department should be extended in its scope sufficiently to reach the case of this petty boss, whose incumbency of a federal office is a disgrace to the administration.

SHAMROCK III.

The performances of Shamrock III since her arrival on this side of the Atlantic fully confirms the belief that she is the most formidable of all the challengers that Sir Thomas Lipton has sent over to lift the cup. She is a marvel of speed and far superior to the earlier Shamrocks. Undoubtedly Sir Thomas has brought over the very best boat that life has yet produced. Yachtsmen are looking forward to the cup races with no small anxiety, for despite the acknowledged prowess of Reliance, it is recognized that the contest will probably be the closest that has yet been seen since the trophy was first brought to our shores, half a century ago.

The police department of this city has been subjected to much criticism because of the recent epidemic of highway robberies. If the department is inefficient it may be traced directly to the circumstance that it is being converted into a political machine. Such a transformation is invariably destructive to discipline and ruinous to the efficiency of the department. It was announced by the Chief of Police only a few weeks ago that no man would be allowed to stay on the force who had not "voted right," which meant that no policeman not actively identified with the Mitchell-Matthews machine could hope to hold his job. The Civil Service Commission is notoriously the instrument of this machine, and all its efforts have been directed toward the consummation of the policy announced by Chief Hunt. So long as this state of affairs is permitted to continue, it is idle to expect good results from the police department.

The law relating to county officers of Multnomah County provides that the Sheriff shall receive a salary of \$4,500 in full compensation for all his services. The present incumbent is said to be making more than double that amount out of his office. If the grafting from which the county has suffered in the past is to be terminated, the Sheriff's office is a good field for investigation.

Evidently we shall have to forget all about those unnamable criticisms of our country which filled the German press a few months ago. Kaiser Wilhelm has sounded the keynote of warm friendship and all trace of bitterness seems to have disappeared. The welcome accorded to the American sailors at Kiel could not have been more cordial

PIANOS THE FLOOD RUINED.

A reporter at Topeka finds that 312 pianos were destroyed in the North Topeka flood. If these instruments had an average value of \$300, the total would amount to \$93,600. One thing is certain, not a single piano which passed through the flood will ever be used again. Pianos are commonly regarded as of strong and substantial construction. To look at those which passed through the Topeka flood one would conclude that they were as fragile as a house of cards. Their woodwork is swelled, bulged and split. Their veneering has peeled off like paper from a wet wall. Their internals are warped and twisted out of all semblance to an orderly machine. They have been thrown out in the streets, without an exception, to be hauled away with other rubbish.—Kansas City Journal.

There are at the present moment in France 200,000 houses which have no windows, because—incalculable as it may seem—there is still a French window and door tax.

"I am a self-made man," said the proud individual.

"Well, you are all right except as to your head," commented the other part of the conversation.

"How's that?"

"The part you talk with is out of proportion to the part you think with."—San Francisco Wasp.