A FAMOUS BIG WHEEL

Probable End of the Great Midway Feature.

The Invention of Ferris Has About Served Its Purpose and Will Soon Find Its Way to the Scrap Heap.

When the Ferris wheel is sent to the scrap heap—a thing likely soon to happen—the greatest engineering vagary of the century will have passed into that oblivion reserved for fads, flying machines and perpetual-motion contrivances. Not that the great Ferris wheel is any of these, says the Chicago Post, but simply because it never could serve any practical use, because it embodies no distinctly new principle in engineering and because it has a marvelous faculty of emptying the coffers of those who try to make its huge bulk earn even a small part of the cost of maintaining it—to say nothing of the cost of original investment.

As one of the wonders of the world's fair of 1893—perhaps the chief wonder—the Ferris wheel stood unique. Its great size, marvelous construction and distinct novelty made it not only the crowning feature of the midway, but the gossip of four continents. During the continuance of the exposition more than a million and a half of visitors from all quarters of the globe rode in its suspended cars and from a height of 264 feet caught a bird's-eye glimpse of the fair grounds, the lake and the distant city.

Though less than a third the height of the Eiffel tower of the Paris exposition, the Ferris wheel was a much greater wonder. The Eiffel tower was merely a continuous projection of successive towers one upon another. Given a suitable base, its construction simply meant the stringing of iron and steel straight into the air. But in the Ferris wheel something new in construction was accomplished—new because of its great size. It was the projection of a gigantic circle, carrying thousands of tons of steel and iron suspended from an axle and readily movable by the application of machinery. To have built the Ferris wheel simply to stand upon its periphery would have been a comparatively simple task. To suspend this mass of metal from a central point and give it motion was the conception of genius.

About $25,000 was spent in plans, tests, etc., before the actual construction of the wheel began. Some 30 firms took part in its making and a Chicago firm saw to its erection. When ready to be turned the Ferris wheel had cost $362,000 and had consumed about 8,000,000 pounds of iron and steel. The movable part of it weighed 4,200,000 pounds, and it required two engines of 1,000 horse-power each to keep it turning. And so nicely adjusted were all the parts, so well balanced was the great steel circle with its 36 cars, capable of carrying 2,160 persons, that it was under as full control as a sewing machine or a pony engine. Once or twice during the world's fair the motive power needed adjustment, but the only results so far as the public was concerned were humorous incidents, which gave the newspaper men a few columns of anything but dull reading matter.

It is barely possible that had the world's fair lasted a year or two the Ferris wheel might have paid for itself. This is based on the assumption that it would have continued to be a novelty for 12 months or more. As it was the gross earnings of the wheel during the fair were $812,000. About one-fifth of this went to the stockholders as profits. The power necessary to operate the big wheel would have run a cotton factory of 100,000 spindles and 3,000 looms and employing 5,000 operatives. The boilers of the power plant consumed coal like an ocean liner. No other single feature of the great exposition represented such an expenditure of energy.

But the fair lasted only six months, and the Ferris wheel ceased paying dividends with the closing of the exposition gates. Had it gone from its place on the Midway direct to the scrap pile or to Coney Island, as was at one time suggested, more than one Chicagoan would have been some thousands of dollars richer to-day. The wheel that was such a drawing card on the shores of Lake Michigan, where the surroundings were somewhat proportioned to its size, was moved to the North side of the city and placed in a space so small that the cars hung over other property while the wheel was revolving.

There it has turned occasionally for the last few years, eating up coal, piling up cost, an eyesore to the neighborhood and a white elephant to its owners. What has the big wheel cost to date? Deducting the sum paid to stockholders during the world's fair, and counting as part of the cost what it has lost to its owners, it is safe to say that $1,000,000 will not cover the total. To move it from Jackson park to the North side cost alone $175,000, and it is figured it will require an expenditure of at least $25,000 to take it down and remove it from where it now stands.

With the passing of the Ferris wheel the questions naturally arise: Why was it built? What has it accomplished? Has it proved any new and useful principle in engineering? Aside from its being the concrete of an idea conceived by its designer, the Ferris wheel undoubtedly was built to make money. Those who invested in it purposed taking advantage of the popular craze for novelties and fads, but the investment was too large to permit the popular craze to outlast it.

Are Learning.

A London military expert says the British have still the arts of war to learn. They are at least going to a good school, says the Chicago Record.

NOT AS RICH AS REPORTED.

Oom Paul Kruger Is Not the Lordly Capitalist He Is Generally Pictured.

One of the South African papers having published an exaggerated account of the worldly possessions of President Paul Kruger, a London journal has undertaken to get at the truth as to his wealth. It is generally admitted that the head of the Transvaal rebellion is the possessor of valuable property, entitling him to the rank of millionaire, but that his real estate is worth "between £19,000,000 and £20,000,000" even the most credulous would be loath to take in without a grain of salt. The South African paper goes on to state that "he owns 180 freehold farms, many of them on the Main reef, which he would not allow to be worked," but it is to be remembered that there are not a great number of farms on the Main reef altogether. He is, however, known to have sold one farm for $500,000. He is said to be the largest land owner in Rustenburg district, and the largest shareholder in the Netherlands railway, dynamite concessions and Hatherley distillery. This may be true, although there is no confirmation of it. As regards his alleged ownership of a large and valuable estate in Cape Colony, one in Holland, and also one in Germany, little is known, but it is generally believed that he has taken care to invest in property that cannot easily be touched by the imperial power. He is credited with having two millions in German consols, but whatever his holding in that security amounts to there are no data to go upon, as it is in the form of bearer securities, whose ownership could only be estimated.

WHY NO WINGS.

The Extraordinary Query of a Gushing Lady Orator and Its Rude Answer.

I remember once in a society to which I belonged a lady lecturer of the gushing order read a paper in which she was very adverse to the theory of a beneficent Providence, says a writer in Nineteenth Century. "Why," she asked, "are we without wings, if all this omnipotent love directs the course of the universe? Why have I not been furnished with wings wherewith I might fly to the ends of the earth to my loved ones?" There was a discussion after the paper, when a dry old one-eyed philosopher made this pithy speech: "Mr. Chairman, our lecturer this evening complains because Providence has given her no wings. I think she has a cause of complaint, but she's got hold of the wrong one. Her true complaint is because she's got no brains." The hit, though rude, went home with uproarious effect. It was in a measure deserved, and yet I saw with regret how ready is the average audience to jeer at woman's capacity. To me it seems a sorry sort of gallantry which at the opera door waits as squire of dames with cloak and wrap, and then in some smokeroom raises a sardonic laugh by suggesting that idiots are fewer among women because so little noticeable; yet that is a tone of conversation which, in a greater or less degree, the bulk of men very often allow themselves to indulge, partly, no doubt, in jest, yet with meaning in it none the less.

CHINESE NABOBS IN MANILA.

Occupy Residences That Are Equal in Elegance to Those of Europeans.

In the better residence quarter of Manila there are several stately mansions, built and occupied by Chinamen, that are the equal of the finest that Europeans inhabit. One of these in particular, is used for the barracks of two companies of the Thirty-sixth infantry, says the New York Post. A lawn, filled with palms, surrounding a large fountain, lies in front of the house, while beyond the narrow passage leading through the inner court a spacious back garden replete with flower beds and gravel walks slopes down to the swiftly-running Pasig. The paving of the court is of marble blocks, and the stairs leading up to the living-rooms are of the same material. Upstairs, the sides of the main hall are lined with French plate mirrors that extend from the inlaid hard wood floor to the ceiling. The owner, who leased the house to the government, left a fine grand piano for the delectation of the soldiers when off duty. Many elaborately carved pieces of furniture were found stored in one of the rooms, besides tapestries and paintings that would delight the eye of a connoisseur. A large bathroom and an extensive kitchen, provided with cooking apparatus of the latest American design, composed the rear rooms. Everything that could be desired to make life comfortable in a tropical climate was in evidence.

An Old Homestead.

Within a mile of Gethsemane, Ky., is an old brick house, which is, without doubt, the oldest brick house in Kentucky. It was erected in 1781 by Capt. Samuel Pottinger, a Maryland man. The lumber for the interior is made of native walnut worked up by hand. The doors and frames are made of solid walnut, and are very heavy. The locks, nails and hinges came from Virginia, and were made by hand. The plastering was mixed with buffalo hair.

A Long Lightning Rod.

Bavaria boasts that it has the longest lightning conductor in the world. It rises some yards above the top of the meteorological station on the Zugspitze, the highest point in the German empire, and runs down the side of the mountain to the Hollenthal, where there is running water all the year round. The length of the rod is five and a half kilometers, nearly three miles and a half.

ACETYLENE GAS.

How a Canadian Metallurgist Accidentally Stumbled On To a Good Thing.

The facts relating to the discovery of acetylene gas are interesting. It appears that some years ago Thomas L. Willson, of St. Catharines, Ont., was smelting for metallurgical purposes, says the Western Electrician. From time to time he used a good deal of rock salt in his furnace stock, and also limestone as a flux. Whenever these two materials were fused together the slag produced a dirty grayish substance wholly unlike anything else he had ever seen. For weeks he noticed this substance without giving more than passing attention to it, dumping it into the stream upon the bank of which he had built his furnace. One day a curious thing occurred and at a time when the pile of slag had become so large that its top rose above the surface of the water. A minute or two after dumping the slag as usual into the stream, some of it going under and part remaining above the water in a red-hot state, the sizzling and steaming was followed by a bright burst of flame. The next time Mr. Willson used rock salt and limestone the blaze again appeared over the slag after it had been cast into the river, and, it being at night, he was much struck by the brilliant white light produced. The next time that he had a batch of the queer grayish residue to dispose of he did not waste it, but saved it and poured over it some water for experiment. He held a lighted match over the pile, when instantly there was a white, glowing flame.

HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON.

How the Rive Droite and the Rive Gauche, Paris, Differ in Characteristics.

Boxes of books line either side of the Seine and stooping figures hover about them; but the Rive Droite and the Rive Gauche have little in common, says the Saturday Review. The first is blase, or it is bourgeois. It does nothing, or it brawls at the bourse. It is prematurely old, or it totters on a stick. It is pale, and must use rouge. It has tasted every joy; strained every nerve; exhausted every sense.

Youth possesses the other side. Blithe figures caper about. Upon this jeunesse, Notre Dame casts her shadows; the dome of the pantheon rises proudly above it. Faces are fresh, voices gay; no one mumbles about his liver or is conscious of having one. Dissipations, too, are different. Theaters stop glittering before you have crossed the bridge; the Noctambules and Muse, artistic cabarets, begin. No one pulls on white gloves. No one sits in a stall before a ballet. Toasts and blessings are delivered in the Cafe Harcourt, mad measures performed at Bullier's; Paul and Pierre, wild lights of the Latin quarter, rejoice. Both love to clothe themselves in corduroys and wear ties and capes that fly. Both are given to dancing down the street, arm in arm, linked to Gaston and Georges, an amazing row. Both prefer song to study, books to books, pipes to pens and night to day.

Heart Weakness

The heart is the most vital organ of the body. It is the engine that propels the muscles and sends sustenance to the nerves and brain and to all the organs of the body. A flaw in its mechanism is certain to give rise to serious results. Weakness denotes the presence of a flaw. It is a forerunner of something more serious that is to occur. You are the engineer. Look to your engine. See that no accident occurs. HUDYAN is what you need. HUDYAN will strengthen the heart. HUDYAN will make the heart muscles strong and hard. Do not delay too long. Begin the use of HUDYAN now.

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SHE CARRIED THE OBELISK.

A Once Famous Vessel That Is Now Used as a Sea Going Coal Barge.

A vessel which was once a famous steamer, but is now a commonplace seagoing coal barge, is in port loading for a New England port. The Dessoug was built for the khedive of Egypt in 1864 and named the Denton. At that time she was considered one of the fastest and most beautifully appointed vessels afloat, and the khedive enjoyed her immensely for awhile. But he got tired of her and in 1879 William H. Vanderbilt bought her to transport the obelisk from Egypt to Central park, New York. Lieut. Commander Gorringe took command of her, having been detailed for the purpose by the United States government, says the Baltimore American.

The obelisk, which weighs 196 tons, was far from the shore line, and buried, besides, deep in sand. It was altogether too heavy for ordinary machinery to be used, and it was carried down on immense platforms with cannon balls under them for rollers. Then it was placed in a crib fixed on a pontoon. The pontoon and ship were lifted in a graving dry dock, head on to each other, and when this had been accomplished a hole 20 feet long and 12 feet high was cut in the starboard bow of the boat below the water line. Through this the great stone was rolled into the hold of the ship on a groove having an improvised ball-bearing attachment, also made of cannon balls. Inside the obelisk was braced along the keelson, and stout shoring fixed about it to make it immovable. After everything was made shipshape and the ribs and plates were replaced at the bow of the steamer she finally set sail for New York on June 12, 1880.

CARRIES MEALS TO WORKMEN.

How an Enterprising Pennsylvania Boy Is Laying the Foundation of a Fortune.

Thomas Mintzer, a 14-year-old lad of Conshohocken, is probably the most energetic youngster in Montgomery county, says the Philadelphia Record. Through his own devices he earns $15 a week, and only works on an average of six hours a day. His business is meal carrier. About three months ago Tommy called on the employes of the different mills and offered to carry their meals for 15 cents a week. As many of the mills are running night and day, his offer included suppers as well as dinners. Most of the employes were paying 25 cents a week for the same service, and the boy's offer was promptly accepted. At first Tommy was able to carry the dinners in a large express wagon, which was hauled by a goat, but as he steadily gained customers it became necessary to get a large push cart, which he fitted up with shelves. His business finally increased so much that he had to hire a horse and wagon. His customers now number 130.

In order to give general satisfaction Tommy starts out with the dinners at 11 a. m., and delivers those that are farthest away. He then makes a second collection at 11:45 o'clock and, as these customers work in mills near their homes, the boy managed to have all the dinners delivered by 12:05 noon. His weekly collections average $19.50, and as he pays $4.50 for the use of the horse and wagon it leaves $15 clear, which is more than some of his oldest customers earn in the mill.

QUEEREST OF ALL DUELS.

One of the Most Remarkable Affairs of Honor Ever Placed on Record.

Letters from Buenos Ayres give details of a remarkable duel, of which the famous Italian fencing master, Chevalier Pini, was the hero. Pini recently opened a school of arms in the Argentine republic and, having been subjected to some criticism by a local journalist, told the scribe in his own frank, pleasant way what he thought of him. Reparation was demanded and pistols were the weapons selected. The conditions of the meeting were singular. The adversaries were to be placed back to back, and at the word of command were each to take 15 steps forward and then to turn around and fire simultaneously. On the ground the men were placed as arranged and, at the given signal, began to march forward, one of the seconds counting the steps. Pini had only made five strides when he heard a report and the whistle of a bullet past his ear. He turned and saw his adversary with the smoking pistol in his hand. Pini, in a furious rage, dropped his weapon, rushed at his man and gave him a sound thrashing with his fists. The seconds took sides for their respective principals and a general melee went forward until some gendarmes arrived. Pini's adversary then took to his heels and has not since been seen.

Costly Fare for Ostriches.

There was a happening at the ostrich farm recently which disproves the theory that the ostrich is satisfied with eating nails, barbed wire and the like. A man who had visited the farm the day before discovered that his gold watch was missing. Thinking that he might have lost it at the farm, he returned to look for it. When he arrived he enlisted the services of a youth and started in quest, without entertaining much hope of finding the watch. About the first thing noticed by the youth was an ostrich tossing something in the air. It was the watch, and would have been swallowed if it had been a glass-faced watch. It happened that both sides were opened and lodged in the beak. The next day the valuation of one of the birds was enhanced [illegible]. It swallowed a diamond from [illegible] of a woman visitor, who [illegible] sought to console the bird [illegible] its forehead.—Arizona Republican.

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Josephine County Maps.

The official map of Josephine county can be had at the COURIER office at reduced prices. Folding pocket map, $1; wall maps in colors, $3.50. Call and get one.

Summer Resorts.

To the mountains our people in increasing numbers yearly look for those days of relaxation and recreation necessary to maintain the human machine in air working condition. The languorous sloth of the seashore proves very seductive while it lasts, but many have decided that the annual outing should provide not only radical change of air and surroundings, but also such stimulation of dragging energies as will provide brawn and vigor for the return to labor. For this they urge the mountain climb and ramble, the balsam of the mountain pines, and the clear, unadulterated mountain air.

In this direction the Shasta Route now affords a wealth of attractions. The entire line of road from Ashland to Redding is studded with charming and accessible hotels and camps, where are cheer and comfort and healing at reasonable cost, and where you can hunt, fish, ride, loaf or play with equal facility.

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