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The ostensible reason assigned for Mark Hanna's contemplated retirement from the chairmanship of the republican national committee, is ill health, but there are knowing ones within the ranks of the party who seem to think differently. They say that Hanna believes the rising anti-Roosevelt sentiment in the east will bring him prominently forward as the logical republican candidate for the presidency, and his retirement is to be accounted for on these grounds. Others say that the Wood incident is to be held responsible and that Hanna is not a candidate. But it is beginning to look a little like the buzzing of the presidential bee has smitten the auditory apparatus of M. Aurelius, whatever may be said.

Press reports state that Herbert Spencer, the most distinguished philosopher and scientist of modern times, is critically ill at his Brighton, England, residence. Mr. Spencer is an old man, having last April celebrated his 83rd birthday. His life has been one of indefatigable research, and there are few, if any, characters in modern history whose works are destined to live longer and to exert a more powerful influence upon mankind than Spencer's. He is one of the most clear and concise reasoners and at the same time possesses the most lucid and engaging style of any man who ever wrote in the English language. His life has been assiduously devoted to the investigation of scientific, sociologic, ethical and kindred subjects, and the rich heritage which he leaves will forever make the name of Herbert Spencer great.

The Eugene Register, in proof of the healthfulness of Oregon climate states that there are more old vigorous people there than in any other state in the union. This is no doubt true, but it is hardly a point in our favor at the present writing. It is the lingering of these old pumpkin pushers and hay seeds which accounts for the non-progressiveness of the state as far as salutary legislation embracing all sections is concerned. In the matter of natural resources Oregon has few equals and no superiors in the family of states, but as long as a lot of narrow minded farmers who are blinded to every other interest save their own, control legislation, we will contend with a serious handicap which will have the effect of intimidating outside capital. So, if it could be arranged for some temporary climatic blight to gather these old fogies to their fathers, it were better for the general progress of the commonwealth.

If President Roosevelt doesn't change his "independent" policy, he will fail to secure that renomination yet. The powerful money in-

terests, already alienated, are out for his scalp. The politicians are also getting tired of his erratic gallery plays. He has offended many of the western senators and congressmen, by treating them as suspects. If the politicians and the business manipulators combine against him, his defeat will date from that agreement.

Today the whole country is trembling for fear that there is soon to be a pronounced stringency in the money market, a period of commercial depression. There is absolutely no reason, based on economic conditions, for such a state of affairs. There are a half dozen men in New York so strong financially, so influential in every way, that they can create an artificial panic, and it would not be surprising to learn that they are preparing for just such a coup, for the effect it will have politically, to defeat Roosevelt; as they defeated Bryan, for the same, though a stronger reason.

All men who have any thing to think with and have any knowledge of history know that this is a danger signal to the republic, but they also believe and fear that there is little or no use in trying to combat the influence of these gigantic combinations of wealth.

As every one who knows anything at all about mining matters is aware, the Homestake in the Black Hills is the greatest gold mine on earth; has broken the world's record as a producer. Yet, if it had chanced to fall into the hands of some eastern syndicate that operates a mine on the business principles that insure the success of a peanut stand—methods that every western operator has learned by observation to mean failure—the probabilities are that the Homestake would never have paid a dividend.

Fortunately, however, that splendid property came into the possession of California mining men, the elder Hearst among the number, men of ample means who know what was necessary to open up a mine; knew that vast sums of money must be expended before satisfactory results could be obtained. So they set out a man in whose judgment and honesty they had confidence, one, Mc Masters, with instructions to make a mine of the prospect, and then let him alone. He spent a full million dollars before a stamp dropped on ore.

Had these men "got cold feet," when a half, or three-quarters of a million had been spent, the Homestake, too, would have been in the list of mining failures. It requires the characteristics of a thoroughbred, a plunger to make much of a success in mining, and these qualities are rarely found in the eastern business man. The best, the most successful mining man is he who has made his money in mining.

During the past few weeks several gentlemen have returned from the money centers of the east, where they went to promote mining propositions, and all of them bring back the same story. There is nothing doing now; but all conditions are favorable for enlisting capital within the next six months. The public is just beginning to recover from the shock it received from the recent shrinkage in industrial stocks.

There is no scarcity of money; the great mass of securities offered were undigested because they were indigestible; not because the investors were financially unable to absorb them. This money that the Wall street thimberigens failed to get hold of is a trifle shy and coy at this time,

but is as anxious as ever to earn interest.

Savings banks and real estate six per cent mortgages have lost their fascination for men of means; speculation in all kinds of stocks is the fire that has burned the grown-up children; get rich quick schemes are in disrepute, and legitimate mining that pays comparatively large dividends is today the only sure and profitable investment offered the public. The indisputable fact that fortunes, tangible, gold fortunes that are dug from the ground, created, indestructible wealth, are constantly being made in mining, has given that industry favorable repute, and ere long it will win its earned reward.

Just before the holidays it is always dull, from the promoters' standpoint; this condition has always obtained and the fact that many deals are hanging fire is no occasion for discouragement.

One of the December magazines publishes the pictures of a dozen or more of the women prominent in the official set at Washington, wives and daughters of high officials, and not in the entire bunch is there an attractive, womanly face. That of the president's wife indicates intelligence and culture, but it is painfully plain, almost repellent. Some show hard, tired looking countenances, such as are characteristic of European peasants, telling a tale of early labor and hardship. There are several that would look entirely at home behind the glove and ribbon counters of a department store; while still others are coarse and crude, stating as distinctly as could language itself that this is the first generation to rise above the common herd, and time has not yet given education and wealth and easy luxury an opportunity to work their magic, beneficent effect on the minds and bodies of the breed.

The clergymen of Rhode Island are banding themselves together in an effort to minimize the divorce evil. Different beliefs are represented in the movement, and there appears to be a lack of harmony in the matter of what persons are eligible to remarry. Some agree not to marry a person who has been divorced for any cause, others admit unfaithfulness, and still others agree to solemnize the marriage of the innocent party. While there is not the desired uniformity that there should be in the movement, yet it is a start in the right direction. The spiritual marriage with which the church has to do largely, however, is only one phase of the situation. The courts of the country should take a hand and aid the church in its crusade against the divorce evil. If marriage is denied by a minister of the gospel, it is an easy step to have the rite solemnized before some judge, which is possible in most instances. Ill advised marriages and the consequent divorces would become more rare, if marriage were made difficult. But what is needed is national uniformity in the matter.

Recent statistics prepared by the minister of commerce in France make the startling revelation that the population of that country is actually dying out. Out of a total population of 36,000,000 there was an excess in 1902 of only 83,944 births over deaths. There were in this year 11,896 fewer births than in 1901, although there was a marked diminution in the death rate. For the last ten years the population

of France has increased by only thirteen units, while that of other European countries has greatly exceeded this. Germany showed an increase of 147 units Austria, 116, Belgium, 109, Great Britain 116, Italy, 119. Two reasons are cited for this rapid national decay of population. One is the working of the famous "Code Napoleon" which makes the children both the legal and natural heirs of their parents. That, is the father's will is the son's, and disinheritance is unknown. The parents are desirous that the children stand well financially, therefore fewer children mean a better inheritance. The other reason cited is the national spirit of thrift and parsimony. More children mean a greater outlay for their support by the parents before the children can be turned to account in the business of money making—a cold blooded business proposition, which throughout is tinged with the teachings of the late Malthus.

If Mr. Roosevelt should miss the presidency, France would offer an admirable field for him to do missionary work along the lines of race suicide.

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