

RICH BUT UNCULTURED.

One of the Oddities Created by Successful Operation in Western Mining Schemes.

There is a man in this city, says the New York Telegram, whose peculiar career has been in harmony with his peculiar character. He was born in the south, has had some education, though he cannot be considered an educated man, and has lived in many parts of the world. He is one of those men whose indomitable will power makes success with them a foreign conclusion. He is now about forty-five years of age, the possessor of a tremendous fortune, which he has made by speculating in western mines since 1875, when he lost a comparatively small fortune which he had inherited. This calamity, instead of depressing him as it would many men, seemed to bring out all the latent power in his nature. He went west immediately with his large family, lived with the greatest economy and was happy in the confidence of his ultimate success. This success came to him in a very short time. He found himself to be the possessor of an admirable judgment of the value of mines, and showed an extraordinary skill of driving a hard and close bargain. As one of his friends has said of him: "He has made his money by squeezing it out of others. He would, by taking advantage of a man's embarrassed financial situation, get all his property out of him, and then, with a fine magnanimity, present his victim with fifty dollars as a gift."

A few years after his advent in the west he found himself a millionaire. As soon as the discovery was made it dawned upon him that the west was too small a place for him. So he came to New York expecting to take the town by storm. But, strange as it may seem, he has not succeeded in this ambition. On the contrary, there are few people who know that he lives in this big city. He, the possessor of two millions, is thrown into the shade by scores of New Yorkers, each of whom possesses many millions more. But he is well content. His experience in New York has taught him to affect a contempt for wealth, though he still continues to accumulate it. "Money," he says, with a fine scorn which is very amusing to those who know him, "money is not worth striving for. There are other things in the world of greater importance than mere pelf." He is particularly fond of making this remark to those persons with whom he has business relations. He certainly convinces them that there is no use in striving for money with him, for in the struggle for it he is sure to win. This, however, is only one of his many aphorisms. He loves to pose as a philosopher and to scatter bits of wisdom around him, some of which have a strangely familiar sound, as though they had been said before by some one else. He is also very religious, and he invariably throws the cloak of his religion over his little provariations and hard business dealings. His life in the wild west seems to have inspired him with an intense desire to be a gentleman and to surround himself with gentlemen, and his efforts thus far have resulted in some curious episodes. His rapt speeches to his guests at table are the talk of those who have met him, and his peculiar manners have already inspired one novel writer to put him in a story. He has an intense admiration for Napoleon, whom he takes for his model, and imitates in a manner which gives delight to those who can appreciate it. Altogether, he is a most curious example of a civilization which is rapidly dying out, of the type which is neither bear nor gentleman, but a cross between the two, the result of a state of social transition which produces in him a mixture of natural vulgarity only imperfectly concealed by a veneer of spurious refinement.

DESCENT OF THE BARINGS.

History of a Great Commercial Family Extending Through Centuries.

Two centuries ago there lived at Bremen, in Germany, a pastor of the Lutheran church named Franz Baring, or Baering. In those days, says Spare Moments, the ministers of his order might be men of great learning, but their circumstances were at the best moderate. His son, John Baring, went to England and established himself as a clothmaker near Exeter, in Devonshire. From the ranks of the cloth drapers and the linen drapers, quite as often as from among the goldsmiths, the merchants and bankers were then recruited. John Baring's son, Francis, born in 1740, was sent at an early age to learn the "art, trade and mystery" of a merchant, and before he died he made himself, by consent, the first merchant in the world.

He was a director in the Honorable East Indian Company, then one of the highest rewards to which a merchant might hope to attain; for a time he was the great company's chairman; for twenty-two years he sat in parliament, then a far more exclusive body than it has become under the extended suffrage; in 1798 he was made a baronet; in 1810 he died. But his first title to honor is that he founded the house of Barings. His sons were the first Baring brothers.

A Chemical Triumph.

The complete isolation of fluorine by a French scientist is a recent chemical triumph which has excited much interest. Fluorine, as described for the popular understanding, has a small resemblance that of hypochlorous acid, which is somewhat masked by the odor of ozone, from its action on water vapor. It, of course, acts very actively on the respiratory organs, even when greatly diluted, and it causes insensibility, lasting as long as a week or more, of the mucous membrane of the nose. It is of a yellowish-green color, somewhat lighter and yellower than chlorine. It combines explosively with hydrogen, even at a great cold and in the dark, and sulphur, selenium and tellurium take fire in it at ordinary temperatures. Bromine and iodine burn in it with a flame of low temperature, and amorphous carbon, amorphous boron, and especially crystalline silicon, with the evolution of great heat. Many other substances burn in it, oxygen and nitrogen appearing to be the only elements with which it does not unite.

THE GREAT INLAND CITY.

What Has Helped Chicago in Her Phenomenal Growth.

A generation ago, says the London Spectator, America consisted of the settled northeastern and southeastern states and of the great expanse of more or less wild continent behind them. Year by year, however, the population has been spreading west, and every fresh census has pushed inland the mean line of population—the line on either side of which the population is equal. The significance of this gradual withdrawal of the mean population line from the coast must not be missed. The fact means that the Anglo-Saxons in the United States are becoming what they have never been before in their history, an inland people.

In a very little time the vast majority of Americans will not only have never seen the sea, but will never have been within a thousand miles of it. The destiny of the American people is to become as much a people of great inland plains as the Russians, and this fact will be made clear to the world when travelers leave the ocean at New York, and after traveling inland over a thousand miles find themselves in a city as big as Vienna, and ten times as rich and energetic.

The existence of a great city so far removed from the sea is probably unique in the world's history. Delhi in the days of its greatest prosperity had no doubt a very large population, but unless Moscow can be called great we can recall no other great city of ancient or modern times situated in the heart of a continent. It may be said that Chicago is an exception only in name, and that it could never have achieved the position it has achieved but for the fact that it is situated on the shores of a great double-armed inland sea. No doubt the great lakes have helped Chicago, and no doubt also the fact that they require from the population which surround them all the sea-faring qualities of the English race will prevent its inhabitants from becoming too inlandish in their habits.

Chicago, however, is not enough in the middle of the continent to hold forever the position of the typical American city. As the center of population shifts westward her relative position will decline, and she will ultimately have to give way to some younger rival in the west and south, possessed of a geological position more suited to the commercial capital of a nation of some two hundred millions of inland people. Still, as we have said above, Chicago for the time will serve as an object lesson in regard to the great change which has come over the conditions under which the American continent is inhabited.

INCONTESTABLE POLICIES.

Life Insurance Companies Issue Them Only in Europe and Central America.

The policies written by some of the leading life insurance companies of this country are incontestable for any cause whatsoever. If a policy holder commits suicide immediately after paying his first premium, and before the ink is dry on his policy, his heirs will receive the money just the same. That is because the companies know that life is the most precious possession of every individual, and that very few indeed will throw it away in order to benefit an heir. The "incontestable clause" is found, however, only in the American policies. Those issued to Europeans, Central Americans and South Americans do not have them. One of the chief officials of a leading company recently said to a reporter for the New York Sun:

"All our foreign policies are written subject to cancellation. It is true we discover very little fraud among the European policy holders, but that is because their schemes are so clever we cannot run them down. The chief reason for our writing less liberal policies abroad and in the southern portion of this continent is, however, because wars are so frequent and so liable to occur at any moment. Europe is always on the brink of a great war, and if we should write incontestable policies there we might be ruined any time. In the Central and South American states revolutions are in progress all the time. If our policies were not subject to cancellation there we should be subjected to great losses continually. Our method is to write policies freely, but to cancel them whenever a revolution occurs in the countries in which the policy holders reside."

"Grape Fruit."

"Grape fruit" is a citrus fruit, closely resembling, and by some said to be identical with, the shaddock, named from the growth of the fruit in clusters. Its production in this country is chiefly confined to Florida. The tree is larger and handsomer than that of other fruits of its class. The fruit is large, frequently five inches in diameter, has a smooth, light-yellow skin, ripens later than the orange and is found in the northern markets from December to May. It has medicinal properties, and when well ripened is by many people considered superior to the orange. The bitter membrane that divides the pulp should be removed before the latter is eaten or the pulp should be scooped out from it. There are several varieties, and the number is enlarged by importations. The grape fruit is known also as the pomelo, pomelouise and by other names.

Poisoning from Charcoal.

A new form of lead poisoning has appeared in Paris among the hands of a chemical charcoal factory. The charcoal was rendered more combustible by being treated by nitrate, and thus better fitted for lighting fires. Nitrate of soda or potash ought to be used for this purpose, but the factory proprietor found it more advantageous to use nitrate of lead, which increased the weight of the product. Naturally, the workmen soon exhibited symptoms of lead poisoning. It is proposed to pass a law forbidding the dangerous process under penalty of a heavy fine and imprisonment.

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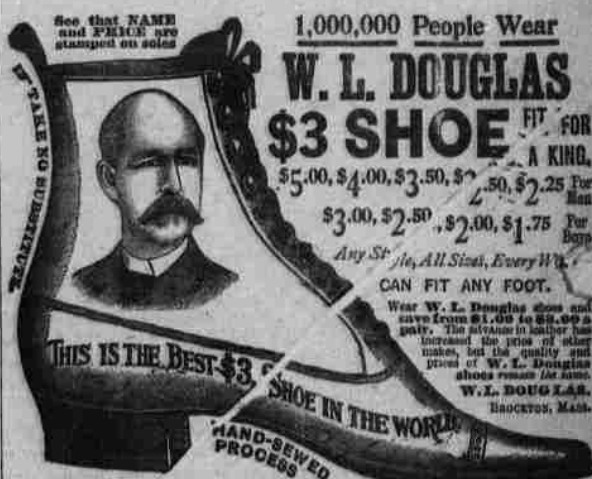
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