THE MIRROR

"OH, WAD SOME POWER THE GIFTIE GIE US, TAE SEE OORSELS AS ITHERS SEE US."

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The coming season promises to furnish a test of the long-cherished project of an air-ship voyage toward the North Pole. Andree's attempt last summer, it will be remembered, was baffled at the decisive moment by unfavorable winds, which continued until he thought it too late in the season to venture. But in June he is to proceed again, under King Oscar's patronage, as before from Stockholm to Spitzbergen, his old starting place, with his balloon, his boat, his sledges, and his precautionary supply of food for four months. His calculation is that a favoring wind will blow him to the neighborhood of the pole within two days; but, assuming it to continue, he must perforce cross the polar area, and it is for the exit, which may be a long process, that he prepares his large stock of provisions and his various appliances. If the Swedish aeronaut should not succeed, Frenchmen may try. Last winter Godard and Surcouf, both well-known balloonists, planned a like trip. They purposed to construct a balloon to carry seven persons that would keep afloat two months, as from extra stores of gas the balloon could be replenished. But since next year has been named as the time for starting, this project is not of immediate interest, and with good luck the pioneer Andree may make it unnecessary.

The project of reaching the North Pole is an old one. Commander Cheyne of the British Navy made a very elaborate plan for such an expedition, which was to have been undertaken fifteen or sixteen years ago, and meetings were held in London to favor it. His scheme was to push far north with a ship and then resort to three large balloons for piecing out the voyage. He expected to reach the pole through the air in thirty or forty hours. But the project as thus planned was costly, since to the expense of the ship was added that of balloons weighing in all about three tons, as they were to carry seven persons, sledges, dogs, and provisions and water for more than seven weeks. Finally the plan was reduced to one for ships and sledges, with ballooning as a last reliance; and then it was dropped altogether. Some years later, about 1890, two Frenchmen, Besancon, the aeronaut, and Hermite, the astronomer, renewed the project, with with improvements, making it similar to the present one of Andree. They were to use a single balloon, and to start from Spitzbergen, while four large bags of hydrogen gas were to be carried, somewhat as in Godard's project, to replenish waste. They were to take eight dogs, a sledge, a small canoe, and a month's provisions, while a heavy rope and another anchor dragging along the ice or water would keep the balloon at a regular distance from the earth.

In these previous projects, as in Andree's, it was clearly recognized that the very supposition of a strong, favoring wind, implied the blowing of the balloon past the pole, and the necessity of an exit on the opposite side of the Arctic circle. But is this result to be relied upon? The French Society of Aerial Navigation, after fully discussing the subject, disapproved the project of Bensancon and Hermite, who were among its members. The President argued that all the information on the subject showed a probability that, instead of winds blowing steadily across the pole, there was a region of circular currents, and a balloon once among these would be likely to be carried about in them without power of escape. He also dwelt upon the difficulty of navigation through mists and snows, and with frosts upon the ropes. However, this adverse opinion, as we see, has not daunted the Swedish aeronaut. He has had some experience, having crossed the Gulf of Bothnia from Sweden to Finland. His reply to the circular current is the plan of abandoning the balloon, if necessary, and escaping by sledge and boat. A glance at the map, which shows that the northern part of Spitzbergen reaches nearly to the eighty-first parallel of latitude, shows that there would be a clear possibility of reaching the pole within two days if favored by a strong wind. And just here it is interesting to note that only a few weeks ago a balloon accomplished a journey of 375 miles from Paris to Agen in a little more than thirty hours, its rate varying from fifteen to fifty miles an hour. Two still longer flights were made during the siege of Paris, one of the balloons, much to the distress of the occupants, who could not prevent it, travelling to Norway. At least good wishes can go for the Swedish explorer, who will undertake a task for which so many doubtless expect no great success.

A Western editor has a cure for poets. He detains them in a padded cell while an amateur elocutionist is employed to hurl their productions at them through a grated window.

Conductor—"Did you see the man with the child?" Driver—"No." Conductor—"He's the proudest father I ever met. Insisted on paying full fare for the six-months-old baby."

"LET GOD BE TRUE."

REV. DR. TALMAGE ON THE PLAGUE OF INFIDELITY.

Some Evidences That the Christian Religion Is Anything But a Huge Blunder—The Fruits of the Spirit—God's Veracity.

Rev. Dr. Talmage preached on Sunday on "The Plague of Infidelity," taking for his text, Romans, 3, 4. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

That is, if God says one thing and the whole human race the opposite, Paul would accept the Divine veracity. But there are many in our time who have dared arraign the Almighty for falsehood. Infidelity is not only a plague, but is the Mother of Plagues.

It seems from what we hear on all sides that the Christian religion is a huge blunder; that the Mosaic account of the creation is an absurdity large enough to throw all nations into rollicking guffaw; that Adam and Eve never existed; that the ancient flood and Noah's Ark were impossibilities; that there never was a miracle; that the Bible is the friend of cruelty, of murder, of polygamy, of all forms of base crime; that the Christian religion is woman's tyrant and man's stultification; that the Bible from lid to lid is a fable, a cruelty, a humbug, a sham, a lie; that the martyrs who died for its truth were miserable dupes, that the Church of Jesus Christ is properly gazetted as a fool; that when Thomas Carlyle, the sceptic, said: "The Bible is a noble book," he was dropping into imbecility; that when Theodore Parker declared in Music Hall, Boston, "Never a boy or girl in all Christendom but was profited by that great book," he was becoming very weak-minded; that it is something to bring a blush to the cheek of every patriot, that John Adams, the father of American independence, declared, "The Bible is the best book in all the world," and that lion hearted Andrew Jackson turned into a snivelling coward when he said, "That book, sir, is the rock on which our Republic rests;" and that Daniel Webster abdicated the throne of his intellectual power and resigned his logic, and from being the great expounder of the Constitution and the great lawyer of his age, turned into an idiot, when he said, "My heart assures and reassures me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine reality. From the time that at my mother's feet, or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writing, thay have been my daily study, and vigilant contemplation, and if there is anything in my style or thought to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the scriptures;" and that William H. Seward, the diplomatist of the century, only showed his puerility when he declared, "The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the overgrowing influence of the Bible;" and that it is wisest for us to take that book from the throne in the affections of uncounted multitudes and put it under our feet to be trampled upon by hatred and hissing contempt; and that your old father was hoodwinked, and cajoled, and cheated, and befooled, when he leaned on this as a staff after his hair grew gray, and his hands were tremulous, and his steps shortened as he came up to the verge of the grave; and that your mother sat with a pack of lies on her lap while reading of the better country, and of the ending of all our aches and pains and reunion not only with those of you who stood around her, but of the children she had buried with infinite heartache, so that she could read no more until she took off her spectacles, and wiped from them the mist of many tears. Alas! that for forty and fifty years they should have walked under this delusion and had it under their pillow when they lay a-dying in the back room, and asked that some words from the old book might be cut upon the tombstone under the shadow of the old country meeting-house, where they sleep to-day waiting for a resurrection that will never come. This book, having deceived them, and having deceived the mighty intellects of the past, must not be allowed to deceive our larger, mightier, vaster, more stupendous intellects. And so out with the book from the court-room, where it is used in the solemnization of testimony. Out with it from under the foundation of Church and asylum. Out with it from the domestic circle. Gather together all the Bibles—the children's Bibles, the family Bibles, those newly bound, and those with lid nearly worn out and pages almost obliterated by the fingers long ago turned to dust—bring them all together and let us make a bonfire of them, and by it warm our cold criticism, and after that turn under with the ploughshare of public indignation and polluted ashes of that loathsome, adulterous, obscene, cruel and deathful book which is so antagonistic to men's liberty and woman's honor, and the world's happiness.

Now that is the substance of what infidelity proposes and declares, and the attack on the Bible is accompanied by great jocosity and there is hardly any subject about which more mirth is kindled than about the Bible. I like fun; no man was ever built with a keener appreciation of it. But there is a laughter which is deathful, there is a laughter which has the redound of despair. It is not healthy to giggle about God, or chuckle about eternity or smirk about the things of the immortal soul.

First, I cannot be an infidel because infidelity has no good substitute for the consolation it proposes to take away. You know there are millions of people who get their chief consolation from this book. What would you think of a crusade of this sort? Suppose a man should resolve that he would organize a conspiracy to destroy all the medicines from all the apothecaries and from all the hospitals of the earth. The work is done. The medicines are taken, and they are thrown into the river or the lake or the sea. A patient wakes up at midnight in a paroxysm of distress, and wants an anodyne. "Oh," says the nurse, "the anodynes are all destroyed; we have no drops to give you, but instead of that I'll read you a book on the absurdities of all remedies." But the man continues to writhe in pain, and the nurse says: "I'll continue to read you some discourses on anodynes, the cruelties of anodynes, the indecencies of anodynes, the absurdities of anodynes. For your groan I'll give you a laugh." Here in the hospital in a patient having a gangrened limb amputated. He says: "Oh, for ether, Oh, for chloroform." The doctors say: "Why, they are all destroyed; we don't have any more chloroform or ether; but I have got something a great deal better. I'll read you a pamphlet against James Y. Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform as an anaesthetic and against Doctors Agnew, and Hamilton, and Hosack, and Mott, and Harvey, and Abernethy," "but," says the man, "I must have some anaesthetics." "No," says the doctors, "they are all destroyed, but we have something a great deal better." "What is that?" "Fun." Fun about medicines. Lie down, all ye patients in Bellevue Hospital, and stop your groaning—all ye broken-hearted of all the cities, and stop your crying; we have the Catholicon at last! Here is a dose of wit, here is a strengthening plaster of sarcasm, here is a bottle of ribaldry that you are to keep well shaken up and take a spoonful of it after each meal, and if that does not cure you, here is a solution of blasphemy in which you may bathe, and here is a tincture of derision. Tickle the skeleton of death with a repartee! Make the King of Terrors cackle! For all the agonies of all the ages, a joke! Millions of people willing with uplifted hands toward heaven to affirm that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is full of consolation for them, and yet infidelity proposes to take it away, giving nothing, absolutely nothing, except fun. Is there any greater height, or depth, or length, or breadth, or immensity of meanness in all God's universe?

Infidelity is a religion of "Don't know." Is there a God? Don't know! If we should meet each other in the future world will we recognize each other? Don't know! A religion of "don't know," for the religion of "I know." "I know in whom I have believed." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Infidelity proposes to substitute a religion of awful negatives for our religion of glorious positives showing right before us a world of reunion and ecstacy, and high companionship and glorious worship and stupendous victory, the mightiest joy of earth not high enough to reach to the base of the Himalaya of uplifted splendor awaiting all those, who, on wings of Christian faith will soar towards it.

Furthermore, I cannot be an infidel because of the false charges of infidelity in all the time making against the Bible. Perhaps the slander that has made the most impression and that some Christians have not been intelligent enough to deny is that the Bible favors polygamy. Does the God of the Bible uphold polygamy, or did He? How many wives did God make for Adam? He made one wife. Does not your common sense tell you when God started the marriage institution He started as He wanted to continue? If God had favored polygamy He could have created Adam five wives, or ten wives, or twenty wives, just as easily as He made one. At the very first of the Bible God shows Himself in favor of monygamy and antagonistic to polygamy. Genesis ix.: 24 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." Not his wives, but his wife. How many wives did God spare for Noah in the ark? Two and two the birds; two and two the cattle; two and two the lions; two and two the human race. If the God of the Bible had favored a multiplicity of wives, He would have spared a plurality of wives. When God first launched the human race He gave Adam one wife. At the second launching of the human race He spares for Noah one wife, for Ham one wife, for Shem one wife, for Japhet one wife. Does that look as though God favored polygamy? In Leviticus, 18; 18, God thunders His prohibition of more than one wife.

God permitted polygamy. Yes; just as He permits to-day murder and theft and arson and all kinds of crime. He permits these things as you well know, but He does not sanction them? Because the Presidents of the United States have permitted polygamy in Utah, you are not, therefore, to conclude that they patronize it, that they approved it, when, on the contrary, they denounced it. All of God's Ancient Israel knew that the God of the Bible was against polygamy, for in the four hundred and thirty years of their stay in Egypt there is only one case of polygamy recorded—only one. All the mighty of the Bible stood aloof from polygamy except those who, failing into crime, were chastised within an inch of their lives. Adam, Aoeron, Noah, Joseph, Joshua, Samuel, monogamists. But you say: "Didn't David and Solomon favor polygamy?" yes, and did they not get well punished for it? Read the lives of those two men and you will come to the conclusion that all the attributes of God's nature were against their behavior. David suffered for his crimes in the caverns of Adullam and Messada, in the wilderness of Manhanaim, in the bereavements of Ziklag. The Bedouins after him, sickness after him, Absalom after him, Ahithopel after him, Adonijah after him, the Edomites after him, the Syrians after him, the Moabites after him, death after him, the Lord God Almighty after him. The poorest peasant in all the empire married to the plainest Jewess was happier than the king in his martial misbehavior. How did Solomon get along with polygamy Read his warnings in Proverbs, read his self-disgust in Ecclesiastes. He throws up his hands in loathing, and cries out: "Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity." His seven hundred wives nearly pestered the life out of him Solomon got well paid for his crimes—well paid, I repeat that all the mighty men of the Scriptures were aloof from polygamy, save as they were pounded and flailed and cut to pieces for their insult to holy marriage. If the Bible is the friend of polygamy why is it that in all the lands where there is no Bible it is favored? Polygamy all over China, all over India, all over Africa, all over Persia, all over heathendom, save as the missionaries have done their work; while polygamy does not exist in England and the United States, except in defiance of law. The Bible abroad, God honored monogamy. The Bible not abroad, God abhorred polygamy.

Another false charge which infidelity has made against the Bible is that it is antagonistic to woman, that it enjoins her degradation and belittles her mission. Under this impress on many women have been overcome of this Plague of Infidelity. Is the Bible the enemy of woman? Come into the picture gallery, the Louvre, the Luxembourg of the Bible, and see which pictures are the more honored. Here is Eve a perfect woman, as perfect a woman as could be made by a perfect God. Here is Deborah, with her womanly arm hurling a host into the battle. Here is Miriam, leading the Israelitish orchestra on the Banks of the Red Sea. Here is motherly Hannah, with her own loving hand replenishing the wardrobe of her son Samuel, the prophet. Here is Abigail, kneeling at the foot of the mountain until the four hundred wrathful men, at the sight of her beauty and prowess, halt, halt—a hurricane stopped at the sight of a water lily, a dewdrop dashing back Niagara. Here is Ruth putting to shame all the modern slang about mothers-in-law as she turns her back on her home and her country, and faces wild beasts and exile and death, that she may be with Naomi, her husband's mother. Ruth, the Queen of the harvest fields, Ruth, the grandmother of David. Ruth, the ancesters of Jesus Christ. The story of her virtues and her life-sacrifices, the most beautiful pastoral ever written. Here is Vashti, defying the bacchanal of a thousand drunken lords and Esther, willing to throw her life away that she may deliver her people. And here is Dorcas, the sunlight of eternal fame gilding her philanthropic needle, and the woman with perfume in a box made from the hills of Alabastron, pouring the holy chrism on the head of Christ, the aroma lingering all down the corridor of the centuries. Here is Lydia, the merchantess of Tyrian purple, immortalized for her Christian behavior. Here is the widow with two mites, more famous than the Peabodys and the Lexoxes of all the ages, while here comes in slow of gait and with careful attendants and with especial honor and high favor, leaning on the arm of inspiration, one who is the joy and pride of any home so rarely fortunate as to have one, an old Christian Grandmother, Grandmother Lois. Who has more worshippers to-day than any being that ever lived on earth, accept Jesus Christ? Mary. For what purpose did Christ perform his first miracle upon earth? To relieve the embarrassment of a womanly housekeeper at the falling short of a beverage. Why did Christ break up the silence of the tomb, and tear off the shroud and rip up the rocks? It was to stop the bereavement of the two Bethany sisters. For whose comfort was Christ most anxious in the hour of dying excruciation? For a woman, an old woman, a wrinkle-faced woman, a woman who in other days had held Him in her arms. His first friend, His last friend, as it was very apt to be. His mother. All the pathos of the ages compressed into one utterance. "Behold thy mother." Does the Bible antagonize woman?

Futhermore, rather than invite I resist this Plague of Infidelity because it has wrought no positive good for the world, and is always a hindrance. I ask you to mention the names of the merciful and the educational institutions which infidelity founded and is supporting, and has supported all the way through; institutions pronounced against God and the Christian religion, and yet pronounced in behalf of suffering humanity. What are the names of them?

There stands Christianity. There stands Infidelity. Compare what they have done. Compare their resources. There is Christianity, a prayer on her lip, a benediction on her brow; both hands full of help for all who want help; the mother of thousands of colleges; the mother of thousands of asylums for the oppressed, the blind, the sick, the lame, the imbecile; the mother of missions for the bringing back of the outcast; the mother of thousands of reformatory institutions for the saving of the lost; the mother of innumerable Sabbath Schools bringing millions of children under drill to prepare them for respectability and usefulness to say nothing of the great future. This is Christianity.

Here is Infidelity; no prayer on her lips, no benediction on her brow, both hands clinched—what for? To fight Christianity. That is the entire business. The complete mission of Infidelity to fight Christianity. Where are her schools, her colleges, her asylums, of mercy?

Is Infidelity so poor, so starving, so mean, so useless? Get out, you miserable pauper of the universe! Crawl into some rat hole of everlasting nothingness. Infidelity standing to-day amid the suffering, groaning, dying nations and yet doing absolutely nothing, save trying to impede those who are toiling until they fall exhausted into their graves in trying to make the world better. Gather up all the merciful work that Infidelity has ever done, add it all together and there is not so much nobility in it as in the smallest head of that sister of charity who last night went up the dark alley of the town, put a jar of jelly for an invalid appetite on a broken stand, and then knelt on the bare floor, praying the mercy of Christ upon the dying soul. Infidelity scrapes no lint for the wounded, bakes no bread for the hungry, shakes up no comfort for the sick, rouses no comfort for the bereft, gives no grave for the dead. While Christ, our Christ, our wounded Christ, the Christ of the old-fashioned Bible—blessed be His glorious name forever! our Christ stands this hour pointing to the hospital, or to the asylum, saying, "I was sick and ye gave Me a couch; I was lame and ye gave Me a crutch; I was blind and ye physicianed My eyesight, I was orphaned and ye mothered My soul, I was lost on the mountains and ye brought Me home; inasmuch as he did it to one of the least of these, ye did it to Me."

TOO MUCH STUCK UP.

Miss Upperten (daugghter of a rich manufacturer)—Pardon me, miss, but I have not the honor of your acquaintance.

Miss Lowerten (who does not intend to be put down in that style)—I thought you had, at one time; but never mind: Perhaps if my father owned a big mucilage factory like your father's, I'd be stuck up, too.

THE NEWS IN A NUTSHELL.

THE VERY LATEST FROM ALL THE WORLD OVER.

Interesting Items About Our Own Country, Great Britain, the United States, and All Parts of the Globe, Condensed and Assorted for Easy Reading.

CANADA.

Toronto Civic Holiday will be held August 2.

The Sunday car vote will be taken in Toronto on Saturday, May 15.

Hard coal has been discovered on the northern shores of Lake Winnipeg.

The London Council has imposed a license fee of $500 on cigarette dealers.

The Dominion Government has stopped the practice of giving prisoners in the penitentiaries tobacco for good conduct.

Three men are reported at Vancouver, B.C., to have been killed by a snowslide at the Corinth mine, in the Slocan.

Three hundred members of the Six Nations Indians have petitioned Parliament to cancel their electoral franchise.

The mileage of railways in operation in Canada at the end of the last fiscal year was 16,270 miles, an increase of 1,707 miles.

Mr. Casey has a bill before the Dominion House of Commons compelling railway companies to carry bicycles free as baggage.

The regular chartered insurance companies hold $887,872,884 in fire risks in Canada, and there is $327,814,465 of life insurance in force.

The Doherty Process Company of Hamilton has sold the patent for manufacturing iron in Europe to an English company for £100,000.

During the last fiscal year there were 161 persons killed on Canadian railways, of whom 11 were passengers, 46 were employes, and 104 were neither.

Mr. Laurier will probably be accompanied by Chief Justice Strong on his visit to England. The Chief Justice goes to take his seat at the Imperial Privy Council.

The Dominion Government estimates contain appropriations of $10,000 for statues of the Queen and Hon. Alex. Mackenzie, which are to be placed on the Parliament grounds.

Mr. Geo. A. Donet, secretary of the Jamaica Agricultural Society, has written to the Canadian Trade and Commerce Department, pointing out a probable market in Jamaica for cattle.

The wife of Mr. James Laing of the Laing Packing Company, Montreal, died in the dental office of Dr. Rondeau while under the influence of chloroform, which had been administered by Dr. John Hutchison.

In the Dominion House of Commons the other day Speaker Edgar gave an authoritative denial to the statement made in the Senate, that liquor is being supplied within the precincts of the House of Commons.

The Rev. J. Van Wyck, pastor of Gore street Methodist church, Hamilton, and president of the Hamilton Conference died at his parsonage on Thursday night of brain trouble. He was 51 years of age, and was ordained a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1869.

UNITED STATES.

The floods in North Dakota are doing much damage.

Col. Dan Lamont, it is stated, is the newly-appointed president of the Northern Pacific.

The Pennsylvania Railway Company has agreed to carry bicycles free over their entire system.

Congress has adopted a resolution appropriating $200,000 for the relief of the sufferers by the floods.

There are three thousand flood sufferers at Helena, Ark., and the water is now in every house from Helena, to White river.

A Chicago two-year-old boy, in the absence of his mother on Wednesday, heated a poker and burned out the eyes of his infant brother.

Carter Henry Harrison, son of the late Mayor, has been elected Mayor of Chicago, and a great Democratic triumph was recorded.

Walter Damrosch with C. A. Ellis will give grnad opera next season in New York, in French, German and Italian. The new firm has secured Melba.

No trains have entered Yankton, S. D., for nearly a week, and it will probably be a month before railroad traffic is restored to its normal conditions.

Miss Caroline B. Neally, the fair graduate arrested for robbing the rooms of Smith College students at Northampton, Mass., was on Thursday bailed out of jail.

James M. Williamson, fifteen years old, was on Wednesday given an injection of anti-toxine at the Christian Orphans' Home, in St. Louis, Mo., and in forty minutes he was a corpse.

By the will of the late Miss Winifred Martin, of Baltimore, nearly, if not quite half a million dollars is bequeathed to various Catholic churches and charities in Maryland and California.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Mrs. Ormiston Chant, the London social reformer, and six nurses started for the Island of Crete on Wednesday.

The Archbishop of Canterbury will personally deliver into the hands of Mr. Bayard the keg of the Mayflower upon his return to London.

Lieutenant-Governor Kirkpatrick is reported to be much better, and steadily improving. He will sail from England for Canada on the 21st inst.

A London jury awarded Miss Marion Terry £500 damages in an action for libel which was brought against the St. James' Budget for stating she was to leave the stage to marry her brother-in-law, Mr. Morris.

Mr. Curzon, in the House of Commons on Tuesday, said that the insults to the Queen, for which Lieut. Eloff, the grandson of President Kruger, was suspended were of such a nature that they could not be repeated. President Kruger had personally expressed his regrets.

Answering a question in the House of Commons on Wednesday, Mr. Curzon said that the diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Venezuela have not yet been renewed, but her Majesty's Government was ready to take into friendly consideration any proposals from Venezuela to renew diplomatic relation.

Before the Parliamentary South Africa Inquiry Committee letters were read from Sir John Willoughby stating that he understood the raid of the Transvaal was authorized by the Imperial authorities. When questioned on the subject Sir John said he understood so from conversations with Dr. Jameson. Although pressed very hard he refused to answer further.

GENERAL.

Zanzibar's Sultan has issued a decree abolishing slavery.

The King of Siam has started on his visit to Europe and the United States.

The insurgents in Brazil are reported to have gained some victories recently.

The Czar is preparing for his visit to Paris. He will spend two weeks in the French capital incognito.

Twenty persons were killed and many others were injured by an explosion in a fireworks factory at Lisbon.

Turkey has issued a circular to the powers to the effect that it is getting weary of the present condition of affairs.

Herr Lueger, the anti-Semite leader in Vienna has again been elected Burgomaster, this time by three-fourths majority.

A bill will shortly be placed before the French Chamber of Deputies asking for two hundred million francs to build naval docks.

The Congress of Venezuela has unanimously ratified the Guinea boundary arbitration treaty with Great Britain which was negotiated by the United States.

Herr von Stephen, the Imperial Postmaster-General of Germany who was to have been the chief representative of Germany at the Washington Postal Congress, is dead.

Queen Victoria visited the Prince of Wales' racing Yacht Britannia at Nice and conferred the medal of the Victorian Order upon Capt. Carter, the yacht's commander.

M. Zaimis, President of the Boule, the single Greek legislative body, has sent to Mr. Gladstone a message of gratitude for the stand he has taken on behalf of Greece and the Cretan Christians.

THE COCOANUT.

Some Facts About the Tree and Its Valuable Fruit.

The cocoanut is one of the most valuable fruits known. It its native land it furnishes food, shelter, clothing and a pleasant livelihood, says an exchange.

The majority of the cocoanuts used in this country come from Central America, as far down as Columbia and the Spanish Main. The different islands of the West Indies, especially the Islands of Caynon and St. Andrew, contribute large numbers. The little Island of San Blas furnishes the nut of the heaviest meat, the handsomest nut and easiest to work. The number of them, however, is extremely small.

The cocoanut is singularly wormproof. There is, however, one worm, a kind of borer, which attacks the tree itself. It starts from the ground and works its way up through the middle of the tree, where the sap runs, and eventually kills the tree. The leaves of the cocoanut tree are like palm leaves, fifteen feet long.

The blossoms and buds are treated by the natives to produce a liquid called arrack, which is very intoxicating. The tree grown from fifty to 150 years, and yields every year about 100 nuts. There are on one tree at the same time buds, blossoms and fruit ripe and green and in all stages of ripening. The fruit drops off at night. A pulled nut is worthless. The milk inside of it turns sour shortly afterwards and becomes green. Brushes are made of the fiber of the trees. The cocoanut wood takes a very fine polish, and it is largely used for floors, being polished with the husk of the nut and a little beeswax. The nut in its native state is soft, tender and spongy. To take off the shell when the nut is perfectly fresh. Is very easy.

SPRING SMILES.

Freddy—"What is statesmanship, papa?— Papa—"Statesmanship, my son, is successful politics.

Hobson—"Is Robson a man you can trust?" Dobson—"Yes; that is, if you lend him anything; it's all you can do."

"Mos' men," said Uncle Eben, "talks 'bout de commones' kind o' troubles like dey done 'scovered 'em an' could git 'em patented ef dey chose."

"What do you think is the matter with her, doctor?" "Appendicitis, I think." "For Heaven's sake, don't tell her. She would die with joy if she thought she had such a fashionable disease."

Sometimes a man gets credit for thoughtfulness and generosity by bringing his wife home a box of French candy, and then eats four-fifths of it himself.

"Mr. Henpeck," said the doctor, after examination, "I fear your wife's mind is gone." "That doesn't surprise me," said the poor man; "she has been giving me a piece of it every day for ten years."

WASP AND FLY.

When a wasp catches a fly it immediately bites off both wings, sometimes a leg or two, and occasionally the head. Mr. Barrington saw some of the wasps when laden with one fly catch another, without letting go the first, and then fly away with both. There was a constant stream of wasps carrying away flies, probably to feed the larvae in their nests, and returning again to the cows to catch more. In about 20 minutes Mr. Barrington estimated that between 300 and 400 flies were caught on two cows lying close to where he stood. Perhaps this narrative of good deeds accomplished will lead people to think more leniently of the vices of the wasp.

AN UPRISING IN AFRICA.

CHAZILAND REVOLTS AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE.

Twenty-Five Thousand Natives in Rebellion—Great Britain May Have Trouble.

A despatch from Vryburg, South Africa, says that in an encounter with the Bechuanaland insurgents on Tuesday, near Kuruman, the Cape volunteers lost five men killed and had six men wounded. No further details have been received.

A despatch to the London Times from Cape Town says that advices received there from Delagoa Bay announce that the country bordering on and across the Limpopo river, forming for many miles the north-west and northern limit of the Transvaal, is in open revolt. It is added that the position is serious, as troops are leaving for Delagoa Bay by the steamer Carnarvon. A further rising is expected in Manutaland.

Despatches received in London from Pretoria and Delago Bay announce that the whole of Ghazilaland is in open revolt. Twenty-five thousand natives have rebelled against the Portuguese Government. The principal rising, it was stated, was only about forty miles from the Transvaal border. It was added that the Portuguese troops were mobilizing rapidly, and that the situation was regarded as most serious.

Further advices regarding the encounter with the Bechuanaland insurgents on Tuesday state that the British troops captured and burned the native town of Chamazef, at the foot of the Langeberg range of hills. The rebel leader, Galliskwe, who was in command of the natives, made a desperate resistance. The losses of the natives were heavy. One British lieutenant was killed.

DANGER FROM NEW CHEMICALS.

Gases and Compounds Lately in Commercial Use Placed Under Restriction.

Several more or less dangerous articles of chemical manufacture are becoming so largely employed for a variety of useful purposes now that some restrictions as to their sale, conveyance, and storage, are, in the interest of the public safety, imperative, says the London Lancet. Certain substances that were previously regarded as chemical curiosities, have ceased to be so, and are now important commercial commodities and made on a very large scale. Thousands of gallons of "liquid" carbonic acid gas in steel cylinders under high compression may now be seen every day being conveyed in carts from place to place, and similarly other gases are stored under pressure in "tubes," as, for example, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrous oxide, and so on, all of which may expose the public to danger. Solid bricks of metallic sodium, again, kept under naphtha, of course, are every day carried from port to port as part of a ship's cargo, and very serious accidents have occasionally arisen from the intermixture of various chemicals on board ship by the damaging effect of a rough passage upon the packages. The trade in cylinders of compressed gases has already been placed under control. Still another chemical substance of comparatively recent discovery is now so extensively used as to have given rise to the necessity of a Home Office order being issued. We refer to carbide of calcium, which on simply becoming moist gives off the exceedingly inflammable gas acetylene. Carbide of calcium is useful for a variety of purposes, but chiefly because on simply placing it in water it evolves pure acetylene, which possesses a remarkable high illuminating power. The employment of this method of generating a gaseous illuminant for optic lanterns, for photographic purposes, and for lighting private dwelling houses, has already been tried. It is quite obvious that some restriction should be placed upon the sale and storage of this substance, which is now being manufactured on a large scale, and which simply in a moist atmosphere gives off an inflammable gas, which with air forms an explosive mixture. Carbide of calcium is now to be brought under the 14th section of the Petroleum act, 1871, and, after April 1, 1897, it will be unlawful to keep carbide of calcium except in virtue of a license to be obtained from the local authority under the Petroleum act. Doubtless the recent accidents that have been reported from time to time by the employment of acetylene in this way have prompted the Home Office to issue this order, together with a memorandum showing the character of the risks to be guarded against, and giving suggestions as to the nature of the precautions likely to be most effectual for securing safety.

YUKON GOLD FIELDS.

A Government Commission to Visit the Spot and Report.

The Dominion Government has determined upon a step that will have an important influence upon the development of the very rich gold fields of the Yukon country. A commission will be appointed to proceed up there as soon as travel permits and organize a government for the territory and report upon the conditions at present existing. The reports of Mr. Ogilvie of the Geological Survey, who is wintering there, will show that the gold fields of that country far surpass in richness and ease of access anything on the continent. The chief difficulty is not the winter cold but the trouble of getting supplies into the country. The Church of England bishop who lives there states that frequently he is unable to obtain a supply of the necessaries of life, including food. The contemplated action of the government is the wisest step that could be taken and will result in great good.