CURRENT TOPICS.

ALTHOUGH the year 1884 has not yet entered its sixth month the number of lives lost at sea has been terrible. By the four large disasters which have already occurred 412 lives have been lost. These figures, of course, do not include the scores of lives lost in minor catastrophes.

THE example long since set by the United States, and the more recent union movement among the Methodists of Canada, have not, it would seem, been without their influence in Australia. There the unhappy divisions which are characteristic of English Methodism still prevail. The union spirit, however, grows stronger and stronger; and according to our latest news the Bible Christians of South Australia and Victoria have declared in favor of union with the other branches of the Methodist family of churches.

THE present ruler of Afghanistan boasts of his skill as a mechanic, a musician and a physician. In each capacity he believes there is no Afghan to equal him. To expect truth from an Afghan is like looking for water in the desert, says a writer in the London *Times*, but it is said that Abdurrahman is an accomplished liar and an adept in the art of chicane. He is averse to the practice of making oaths, but when he does make one it is considered a sure sign that he has no intention of performing what he has promised.

A NEW Irish grievance has been discovered by Mr. Kenny. The honorable member intends to ask the First Commissioner of Works for what reason the public notice attached to the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey has been altered by the omission of all references to the legend hitherto generally admitted and recognized, viz.: That the Coronation Stone of Scotland was first used for the coronation of the Irish kings and that it was only carried to Scotland by Fergus, the Irish King, who subdued that country.

AN expert connected with the Pennsylvania geological survey estimates the amount of the coal still remaining in the anthracite region at 8,000,000,000 tons. Should the present rate of coal production be continued the supply will last about 250 years. Only 46 per cent. of the volume of the coal in any given vein gets to market. The pillars left standing to support the roof take 33 per cent. of the whole, and 24 per cent. is wasted. Until quite recently only 27 per cent. of the coal vein could be used. The pillars required 41 per cent. and 32 per cent. was wasted.

PERHAPS the most curious battalion in any army is the Norwegian Corps of Skaters. It is composed of picked men armed with rifles, which they use with great precision. The skates used are admirably adapted for travelling over rough and broken ice and frozen snow, being six inches broad and between nine and ten inches long. The soldiers can be manœuvred upon ice or over the snow fields of the mountains with a rapidity equal to that of the best trained cavalry. As an instance of the speed at which they can go, it is stated that a messenger attached to the corps has accomplished 120 miles in 18½ hours, over mountains.

THE combination recently formed by the four leading propeller lines on the lakes to keep up freights to a certain standard will probably collapse before long. "Every one admits," says the Chicago *Tribune*, "that freights are low, but at the same time there are but few who think there is anything to be gained by attempts to bolster them up so long as the present demoralization of railroad rates exists. Supply and demand necessarily regulate the freight market, and at present the supply of transportation facilities largely exceeds the demand. There is plenty of grain to go forward, but no one seems to want it very bad. The same may be said of lumber. The coal and ore trades are in healthier condition, but not sufficiently so to support the entire shipping of the lakes."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL is now fairly a rival candidate with Lord Salisbury for the leadership of the Tory party, Sir Stafford Northcote being in ill-health, and, at the best (if we are to believe a London contemporary), too "niminy-piminy" for the time. Lord Salisbury has the advantage of being twenty years older, of having held Cabinet office and of having latterly been in close contact with Lord Beaconsfield; but he is intellectually arrogant and unsympathetic, whereas Lord Randolph has an eminently sympathetic manner and voice, which are in winning contrast to Salisbury's sardonic gloom and frigidity. When Lord Randolph appeared, bareheaded, before a vast assembly at Birmingham, accompanied by his young and pretty wife, there was seen the perfect historical type of the aristocratic demagogue "*qui a bien studie sa bete.*"

EVERY flower of any note in the woods or meadows in England is associated with the memory of some saintly man or epoch of earlier times. The snow-drop was understood to mark the feast of Candlemas; the Canterbury bells not only cured throat disease—hence called throat wort—but kept alive the holy memory of St. Augustine; the lily of the valley was understood to have first sprung from the sprinkled blood of St. Leonard, slain in a wood near Hastings, where St. Leonard's has since been built. The harebell claims to be worn by none but those who are true. The black spots on the leaves of the common arum, "cuckoo-pint," or "wake-robin," are due to the same cause that colored the red heart's crimson chest or twisted the crossbill's beak, for legends differ as to which of these two birds plucked out the nails from the cross.

JOHN WYCLIFFE, the 500th anniversary of whose death has just been celebrated in England, is believed to have been born in Yorkshire, England, about 1324. He died at Lutterworth in 1384. It is now 500 years since his doctrines were condemned by the Synod of Divines assembled at Grayfriars Priory, London. In his writings he maintained that the authority of the Crown was supreme over all persons and property in England. He was opposed to the whole framework of the hierarchy and to episcopacy and endowments, holding that the clergy should be supported only by alms. He retained the ordinance of baptism, but without regarding it as essential to salvation, and the sacrament of the mass, but without the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some of his doctrines have of late been advocated by modern social reformers, notably his views on the land question, on which he held that private property in land was robbery.

AMONG the 86,000 non-commissioned officers and men constituting the British home army on the 1st of January, and including all young soldiers, there were under 5 feet 5 inches in height 10,622; between that and 5 feet 6 inches, 11,944; between 5 feet 6 inches and 5 feet 7 inches there were 15,810, and nearly the same number, or 15,499, 5 feet 8 inches or an inch under; between 5 feet 8 inches and 5 feet 9 inches there were 12,763; between 5 feet 9 inches and 5 feet 10 inches, 8,725; and between 5 feet 10 inches and 5 feet 11 inches, 5,373. Above that height there were only about 5,000 men, and one-fifth are in the Household Cavalry, of whom 665 are over, and 378 less than an inch under, 6 feet. In the Guards, notwithstanding the lowering of the standard from 5 feet 8 inches, there are but 505 men between 5 feet 7 inches, the new, and 5 feet 8 inches, the old, minimum. In the matter of chest measurement there were 2,376 under 33 inches and 5,543 between that and 34 inches. For each increased inch above that the respective numbers are 13,796, 16,303, 17,106, and 13 690. Above 38 inches the number is of course much less.

M. PARVILLE has discovered a new use for electricity, viz., to protect vines from the disastrous effects caused by any sudden fall in the temperature. It has hitherto been the custom in France to keep a person on the watch in the vicinity of a vineyard, and directly a cold wind arises to set fire to some combustibles, such as tarred straw, and by means of the smoke arising from the fire to warm the air, and so counteract the ill effects of the cold wind. But as this watcher may not always be watching, there is constant wind coming upon the vineyard before the fires can be lighted, and M. Parville maintains that by using electricity this danger may be overcome. He would put one or more electric batteries in the vineyard, similar to the batteries used to fire mines, the wires being connected with the prepared combustibles. By a simple arrangement, whenever the thermometer falls very low an electric current is passed along the wires, lighting the fires on its way, and by filling the air with smoke protects the vines. The idea seems ingenious, and is stated to have been very successful.

THE fact that photographic portraits are so rarely good likenesses is attributed by a writer in *Chambers' Journal* to the circumstance that by photography it has hitherto been found impossible to give colors their true shade value. What is meant by this is that yellow to the eye is a brilliant light tint, but in a photograph it is reproduced almost black; red, instead of giving the idea of fire and light, comes out black, and blue photographs perfectly white; such changes, of course, playing sad havoc with complexions and contrasts of color generally. According to a recent French process, however, the trouble or drawback in question can be obviated, the plan consisting simply in addition to the usual ingredients of the sensitive photographic surface of 1 per cent. of cosine. A modification of the crystoteum process is now being introduced. The photograph, printed in the usual manner on paper, is first of all immersed in a mixture of naphtha, paraffine, mastic drops, ether and vinegar; this treatment makes it quite transparent, so that body colors in oil, if laid broadly on their places on the back of the picture, show through with good effect.

FOR five centuries, from the days of the first Normans to those of the last Tudors, the Tower of London was the official residence of the kings of England, and hence the scene of much of its political history. Plantagenets and Tudors have inhabited it, and for three centuries kings started from it for their coronation ceremony. Two kings, four queens, and many princes and princesses died there. Many have been born there, and two are buried within its walls. There is hardly any other building in Europe, and certainly none in England, of which it can be certainly said, as it can of St. John's Church in the White Tower, that it stands to-day much as it was in the days of the Norman and Angevin kings.

PROF. REUGER, on feeding his monkeys, in Paraguay, with eggs, observed that at first they smashed them and then wasted much of their contents; but they soon learned to hit one end against some hard body and pick off the bits with their paws, and if they cut themselves once with any sharp tool, they would either not touch it again or handle it with the greatest caution. Lumps of sugar were given them wrapped up in paper, and sometimes a live wasp was put in to try them, so that in hastily opening the paper they got stung; but after this had once occurred they always held the packet to their ears to detect any movement.

Poor Dear.

Mrs. Squint—Dear me, Mrs. Blunt, how is it you contrive to hold your age so well? I declare you look as young as you did twenty years ago.

Mrs. Blunt—I don't know unless it is that I escape a great deal of care by attending to nobody's business but my own.

Mrs. Squint—Yes, that may be it; but, poor thing! you can't find much pleasure living, can you?—*Boston Transcript.*

According to the last regulations, the study of German has been made obligatory for all students in the University of Tokio, Japan. Formerly German and French were optional subjects. Lectures, however, in nearly all subjects, are delivered in English, both by foreign and native professors.

A KISS IN COURT.

A Brooklyn Belle Gives Her Sentenced Lover a Farewell Embrace.

When John McElwee, a sentimental youth of 20 summers, was arraigned on a charge of striking his sweetheart, Maggie Andrews, a pert and pretty miss of 19, says the Brooklyn *Union*, he wiped his moist eyes with his coat sleeve as he said: "You see, judge, me and Maggie has been keeping company for some time, and I'm so fond of her that I don't like to see her at all free with other young fellows. Last Saturday we took a walk on Grand street, and Maggie giggled and flirted so with every fellow we passed that I couldn't stand it. The more I growled about it, the more she laughed at me, and at last I got excited and just hit her on the face with my open hand. She fell off the chair somehow, and her head came in contact with a chair rung somehow. That's how it happened, and I'm awful sorry, sir, and I don't think Maggie will press the charge against me."

"Yes, I will," said Maggie, whose pretty blue eyes were also filled with tears, while an ugly bandage half hid her golden tresses. "I'm ready to forgive you, Johnnie, at the proper time, but I don't think I can quite forgive you till I know you've had something done to you for the way you treated me. I want something done to him, judge."

"Very well, then," said the obliging magistrate. "John, the offence you have committed is a most unmanly and brutal one. We send husbands who beat their wives to the penitentiary for three or six months, but I don't know what sentence could be too severe for a young man who thrashes his sweetheart. She should feel thankful that she found you out in time, and should, while she was still free, sentence you to banishment from her society forever, in order that she might be in no future danger of a repetition of so cowardly an assault upon her. That, however, is her business. The sentence of this court is that you be imprisoned in the county jail for the term of twenty-nine days."

Young McElwee cast a despairing glance at Miss Andrews, who, for her part, looked as though she wished she had not insisted upon pressing the charge against her pugilistic lover. The youth blubbered aloud, and tears fell very freely from the blue eyes of the pretty maiden. They looked at each other for a moment, and then the youth ran with his outstretched arms to where the girl stood, and in a second they were locked in a farewell embrace, while their lips met in a kiss whose resounding smack could be heard in every corner of the court-room. The young man was hurried off by the unfeeling officer to his dungeon cell, and the girl stood looking sadly after him until the laughter of the court-room crowd aroused her. She started up, laughed a little, blushed deeply, and ran from the room to the street.

Advice to Plain Women.

Let her whom her sisters call ugly examine herself coolly. She must have some "points." Besides her plain and shapeless face, has she an ill-shaped hand? a figure that no corset will improve? Can the dressmaker do nothing for her? Cannot this ugly quality be conceived, that subdued, something else less offensive brought forward a little? Can the dentist do nothing for those yellow fangs, the scissors for those nails? Cannot some little artful pad equalize those crooked shoulders; some raised heel that limping gait; some oculist that painful spasmodic obliquity of vision? Some powder, wash or paint (let us call a spade a spade)—that last resource of unbearable misfortune—cannot some paint cover that purple stain, that frightful scar on cheek and neck?

A plain woman with any wisdom will make the most of any good point in her physique and as little as she can of her worst points. For instance, if she has a bad, coarse complexion she will not exhibit more square feet of material than are needed. Square feet? nay, nor square inches. She will not wear low dresses, nor very short sleeves. She will carefully select hues in dress that improve, not injure her own natural coloring, and will wear dresses high to the throat, just enough trimmed with lace to give richness, without confusion to the lines of her toilet. Nor will she wear that lace quite white. Only against an ivory skin does quite white lace tell prettily. A woman with a poor complexion will tint her lace with brown (tea and coffee are good dyes), or with the predominant colors in her dress. Thus she will get the softening effects of broken colors at the edges, without the risk of calling attention to her own blemishes.

A very brown woman, however, may make her dark skin "point." Then she will use white lace and all colors that enhance their own deep coloring.

A plain woman with a bad figure can adopt many other harmless devices—at least as harmless as borrowed locks and teeth, which no one now condemns. She can borrow a little embonpoint from the friendly cotton trees; she can swathe in a handsome sleeve the too thin arm or too sharp shoulder which detracts from any lingering merit she may have. She can hide her long, ungainly figure with a short, classical waist; or she can mend the churn-like shape with a corset only sufficient to induce a feminine curve. A thin arm may be hidden by a richly-draped sleeve or improved by thickly lining a close one. A shoulder too low may be mended by a skilful puff or epaulet; one too high by a trimming so placed as to carry away from the upper part.—*Household Notes.*

One of the only two remaining Roman milestones in Great Britain is in Cannon street, London, the other being in Chesterholm in Northumberland. There is Roman work about the Tower of London. Until quite recently an old Roman turret was standing within a hundred yards of Ludgate Hill station, and in Cripplegate may yet be seen a splendid specimen of the original Roman wall.

John E. Smyth, personal property o ve assessed. Total, $4,000. Off, $1,600.

The sufficiency of thy merit is to know that thy merit is not sufficient.—*St. Augustine.*

A miser grows rich by seeming poor; an extravagant man grows poor by seeming rich.—*Shenstone.*

You will never convince a man of ordinary sense by overbearing his understanding.—*Samuel Maunder.*

WHERE STRAWBERRIES REIGN.

The Magical Mixtures That Lull the Palate to Ecstacy Supreme.

As the strawberry season is at hand, a few ideas regarding the disposal of the delicious berry might be timely. Here is one of the best recipes for strawberry shortcake: One pint sifted flour, one-half teaspoonful salt, scant; one-half teaspoonful soda, measured after pulverizing; one full teaspoonful cream of tartar (omit if sour milk be used), mix together and sift two or three times; one-quarter cup butter, one cup sweet or sour milk or cold water. Rub in the butter, or melt the butter and add it hot with the milk, gradually mixing and cutting with a knife, and use just enough to make it of light, spongy consistency. Either bake on a griddle or in the oven. When baked, tear open and spread each half of the cakes with softened butter. Put half of the cakes on a hot plate. Mash a pint of strawberries, sweeten to taste, put a large spoonful on each cake; then put another layer of cakes and whole berries, well sugared. Serve with cream.

Strawberry charlotte.—Line a bowl with strawberries and fill with Bavarian cream. The cream is made up of one quarter box gelatine, one quarter cup cold water soaked together. Whip one pint of cream till you have three pints of the whip. Boil the remainder with one-third cup sugar, and when boiling add the gelatine. Add one teaspoonful vanilla. When the mixture is cold add whipped cream.

Strawberry sherbet.—One pint berry juice, one pint sugar, one pint water, juice two lemons, one tablespoonful gelatine. Or, one pint preserved fruit, one cup sugar, one quart water, two lemons, tablespoonful gelatine.

The New and Novel.

East Cleveland is to have an electric motor for drawing street cars.

A swarm of locusts 9 miles wide is devastating Texmalca, Mexico.

Mrs. Bradley, a Connecticut woman, is dying from the effects of a cat bite.

Custer Co, M. T., has a larger area than the five smallest States of the Union combined.

The Kentucky Legislature has prohibited bicyclists from using the public roads of many counties of the State.

The New Orleans Exposition is to have the largest building in the world. It has 33 acres of floor area.

Carrying War

Into the enemy's country. This is verified in the case of Putnam's Corn Extractor, so favorably known throughout Canada. The large demand from the United States for this great corn cure has induced the proprietors to put it up there, and boldly push it to the front as the leading article in its line. From England also a demand has arisen. This is the reverse of the usual methods, as a large portion of the proprietory goods sold here emanate from these countries. This speaks highly in favor of Putnam's Extractor, the great corn cure. We advise sufferers from this discomfort to test its merit.—*Exchange.*

A Santa Barbara, Cal., man realized $1,100 from an acre and a half of strawberries last season. This year he has been selling about $30 worth daily, at wholesale prices, from the same patch.

Fair Evidence for Everybody.

No one can doubt the great merit of Polson's NERVILINE, for it has been placed in the market in 10 cent bottles, just to give you the opportunity of testing its wonderful power over all kinds of pain. This is the best evidence of its efficiency, for every person can try for themselves. Polson's Nerviline is a positive (it cannot fail) cure for cramps, headache, colds, neuralgia, and the host of pains that flesh is heir to. Good to take, good to rub on. Go to any drug store and buy a 10 cent sample bottle. Large bottles 25 cents.

Mahdiism is catching. Another Mahdi has risen in Bokhara by the name of Mohammed Abdallah Ben Oman. He has taken the title of Kefrid, and has written a letter to the Sultan calling upon him to unfurl the green banner of Mahommed against the unfaithful.

—It is truly wonderful to see how the name of Mrs. Pinkham is a household word among the wives and mothers of our land. Alike in the luxurious homes of our great cities and in the humble cabins of the remote frontier one woman's deeds have borne their kindly fruit in health for others.

It is proposed to increase the Brooklyn police force by 100 additional patrolmen.

The latest fashion among the "gilde youth" of Paris is a cambric pocket handkerchief bearing the portrait of a favorite actress printed in the corner.

When a man has meant anything strongly, there's never any real going back again for him. It isn't the failure or the success, it's the purpose, the will that is in him, that makes the difference.

Savanyu Joszi, a Hungarian highwayman who has for some time past levied a regular blackmail from farmers, and for whose head a large sum had been offered, has been captured. He used to live like a gentleman at fashionable bathing places, and nobody dared to denounce him.

There seems to be a good deal of difference between the authorities in England as to how much a "smokable" cigar costs. Sir Henry Wolff told the House of Commons the other night that "decent" cigars might be had for 9s. 6d. per hundred—that is to say, for a little more than two cents apiece. The London *Times*, on the other hand, assures its readers that a "fair" cigar can be had for ninepence or a shilling—equal to twenty-four cents.

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