CURRENT NOTES

It generally is agreed upon by close students of political economy, and so taught by all the great writers on the subject, that the interests of employers of labor and of the toilers who work for them run in parallel lines, even if not identical. If the employer does not prosper he cannot afford to hire a large number of workers and cannot pay them good wages. And employers as a class compete with each other fully as much and as sharply as the toilers can do, so that while they may have to pinch on wages in dull times they are vitally interested in having able, energetic men men to work for them when such will yield them a profit and the employe whose services are worth having is wanted at good wages.

An understanding of his business, and possession of the capital and other facilities necessary to conduct it, is of no use to the employer unless he can find a paying market for the products of his shop or factory. He cannot afford to operate his works at a loss, paying out more money than he takes in, and hardly dares to keep on buying raw material and paying for labor unless he has a reasonable prospect of selling his goods at a profit. Hence, anything that tends to disturb the market to the extent of lessening the demand injures the employer, and through him damages the wage-earners. A slackening of the demand means more goods on the market than can be sold without loss. The persons who have them to sell compete among each other for customers, offering their wares at lower figures in order to invite purchasing. Then the manufacturer must produce at less cost than before or cease to produce at all till the demand improves. He is obliged to offer less for raw material, and labor, and transportation, and if they will not accept the reductions he must "shut up shop" and discharge his men, for there is no more right or power in the community to compel an employer to operate at a loss than to make the workingman toil without wages.

All the trades unions in the world, if pulling all together, could not do it. Hence the evident folly of strikes on a falling market intended to force the employer to pay higher wages than will allow him to realize a sufficient profit to remunerate him for his time and trouble and enable him to pay interest on the use of the capital engaged in the business after having satisfied the demands of the tax-gatherer, insurance and repairs, the seller of raw material, and the wages of those who work for him at stated wages.

The statistics recently compiled by the United States Commissioner of Labor speak volumes on this subject. They show that the persons who engaged in strikes in that country during a series of years lost thereby more than twice as much as their employers did. Evidently the cases in which they carried their point were those in which the employing class could afford to pay the wages demanded, and it is fair to infer that in nearly all of them the point asked for might have been attained without resort to the costly experiences of a strike. In all the other instances it was simply impossible to grant the demand, because to nominally concede it would have involved the closing of the establishment and the discharge of the workers through inability to sell the products of labor at the enhanced cost necessary to pay the higher wages demanded by the strikers.

If the labor agitators who lecture the workingmen on the supposed "rights of labor" against employers, and try to make them believe the employers are their natural enemies, to be fought and beaten at all hazards and under every possible condition, would consider these things they would be less mischievous than they are now. They would even benefit instead of injuring those who listen to them, if they would endeavor to lead the "hands" to understand the true relation of the two classes. The workers would then see it would be to their own interest not to try to cripple their employers, and would comprehend the fact that one of the very best ways in which they could sustain the labor market would be to avoid and frown on the senseless agitations which tend to unsettle confidence in the market for the products of labor.

"Seeing Life" in Japan.

As a rule the young men of Japan are temperate and well behaved. They are industrious, polite and particularly deferential to their elders. They have clubs and other resorts, but tea-houses are the usual scenes of dissipation. When a young rake wants to sow a few wild oats he gives a dinner at a tea-house, provides an adequate supply of sake—the native drink—and his party sit around on the floor with their food in bowls and upon trays before them, shouting louder and louder as their blood becomes inflamed with the liquor. Five or six geisha dancers are then called in to entertain them with songs and dances, and the proprietor of the tea-house sends them home in 'rikishas when the carousal is over.

It is estimated that the war in Cuba is costing Spain one hundred and forty thousand dollars a day.

THE NEWS IN A NUTSHELL

THE VERY LATEST FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

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

CANADA.

The C.P.R. station at Ottawa was destroyed by fire.

Mr. George King was thrown out of a buggy at London and killed.

Another landslide has taken place in the hunter street tunnel at Hamilton.

The Canadian fisheries protective service on the coast is being withdrawn for the season.

Mr. W. S. Shufflebotham was slugged by two soldiers at Kingston and robbed of $47.

Master Fred Guest, a four-year-old boy, was killed at Hamilton in attempting to jump out of a waggon.

Mr. Bert Upper of Allanburg rode over a 50-foot quarry bank near Thorold and was instantly killed.

A hundred deer were landed at Muskoka wharf, the fruits of recent hunting expeditions in Muskoka.

At Victoria, B. C., J. G. Provost, late Registrar of the Supreme Court, was sentenced to four years for stealing.

The body of Miss Elizabeth Cask of Stratford was found in her apartments over a stove in an advanced state of decomposition.

The steamship Vancouver crashed into her dock at Montreal. Fully forty feet of the wharf were cut through before the vessel was stopped.

The Grand Trunk had $75,000 knocked off its assessment at Hamilton. The Gas Company's assessment was confirmed.

Mr. Justice Gwynne will retire from the bench of the Supreme Court. He is to be appointed Chairman of the commission to revise the statutes.

A consignment of the new rifles for the Canadian militia have arrived. There are a thousand Lee-Metford rifles and three hundred carbines.

Five steamships have gone on the rocks this season in the Lower St. Lawrence—the Dracona, the Mariposa, the Mexico, the Brazilian, and the Canadia.

A smuggling schooner with thirty-eight casks of contraband whiskey on board, was seized by a party of revenue officers on Thursday at Berthier (en bas).

A committee of Winnipeg citizens has reported a scheme of civic reform which recommends the appointment of a general superintendent of all civic affairs.

The October exports from England to Canada increased sixteen per cent., and the imports from Canada decreased four per cent., as compared with the corresponding period last year.

At Port Colborne the water in the canal is lower than it has been for thirty-five years. The depth of water on the lock sill of the Welland canal is 11 feet 11 inches, whereas it should be 14 feet.

Rev. W. B. Hinson, pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church, Montreal, has been called to Moncton, N.B., to succeed Rev. W. W. Weeks, who is coming to the Walmer Road Church, Toronto.

The Dominion Privy Council have decided to give the contract for a winter service between St. John and Liverpool to the Beaver Line, granting a subsidy of twenty-five thousand dollars for ten round trips.

Excitement in Lowe Township is high over the efforts of the Quebec Provincial police to collect overdue taxes. A number of threats have been indulged in, a few acts of violence committed and a general fight between the police and the mob is looked forward to today.

At a meeting of the Board of Arts and Manufactures, held in Quebec, Mr. J. C. Wilson, one of the speakers, offered to contribute five thousand dollars towards the construction of an institution in Montreal, in which young men might obtain a practical technical education of the highest and best quality, provided the Government and municipality each gave a like sum.

Col. Holmes, D.A.G., is now holding an investigation into charges made by the men of the Ninetieth Battalion of Winnipeg, that the regimental fund has been mismanaged and misappropriated. This year the men demanded their money before signing the pay roll, while in former years the moneys granted by the Dominion Government for drill have been turned into the regimental fund.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Mr. Gladstone is preparing a series of articles for The North American Review on "The Future State and the Condition of Man in It."

The Irish Parliamentary party has decided to summon a convention of representatives of the Irish people throughout the world.

Fire-damp caused an explosion at the Winning colliery, near Algreton, in Dervshire. Seven miners are reported to have been killed.

The condition of George A. Sala, the distinguished London journalist, is reported to be much worse. His death is a matter of a short time.

The London City corporation broke a long-standing rule in refusing to pass a vote of thanks to the retiring Lord Mayor, Sir Joseph Renals.

For the Grand Aggregate Competition at the meeting of the National Rifle Association at Bisley next year, it has been decided that the Martini-Henry rifle is to be used.

The Canadian schooner Erie Belle, owned by Toronto capitalists, was libelled yesterday in Buffalo for six hundred dollars, which amount is said to be due to the crew for their season's work.

Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, grandson of the Queen, is to accompany the British expeditionary force which is shortly to start for Coomassie, the capital of Ashanti.

The British agriculturists are taking advantage of the arrival of sheep affected with scab from the United States, via Montreal, to urge upon the Imperial Government the desirability of excluding all imported sheep.

UNITED STATES.

New York coach drivers are on strike.

All the Chicago morning papers are now issued on week days at one cent each.

The American battleship Texas was badly damaged in the Brooklyn navy yard.

Yesterday afternoon a horseless car started from New York on a trip to Chicago.

Next year's meet of the American Canoe Association will be held at Grindstone Island, in the St. Lawrence.

United States Secretary Morton will recommend that no shipment of Canadian cattle by way of Boston be allowed.

It is stated one of the largest banking institutions of Canada will open an office in Detroit on or about the 1st of February.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough will sail from New York for Genoa to-day on the North German Lloyd steamer Fulda.

A demonstration was held in Chicago on Sunday in memory of the Anarchists who were hanged eight years ago. Wreaths were placed on their graves.

It is probable that United States Secretary Carlisle may be appointed to the Supreme Court bench, and that his probable successor will be Mr. Chas. S. Fairchild, of New York.

A report comes from Sandusky, Ohio, that two American boats, while fishing in Canadian waters, were captured by the Canadian cruiser Petrel, which also confiscated more than two miles of seine nets.

Among the passengers who left San Francisco yesterday for Samoa on the steamer Mariposa was Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, who returns to live permanently at her old home at Valima.

The Bank of Montreal in New York has received from Kootenay, B.C., the second largest block of gold that has ever passed through the New York assay office. It weighs 2,435 ounces, and is valued at $41,857.

Edward Wemple, of Amsterdam, N.Y., ex-Senator, ex-Congressman, and ex-State Comptroller, was arrested the other day on a charge of incendiarism. It is claimed that his mind has been unbalanced since he took the gold cure.

Mr. Langlands, manager of the National Line Steamship Co., informs the London correspondent of the United Press that the question of the absorption of the National Line by the Wilson & Hill Line is entirely off, and both companies will continue business as they have been doing.

Mrs. Mary E. Baxter, widow of Gen. H. Baxter, is dead at Rutland, Vt., as the result of a surgical operation. Mrs. Baxter founded the H.H. Baxter Memorial Library in that city at a cost of over $100,000. It is considered the best library of reference in New England. Her wealth is estimated at $5,000,000.

Bishop Doan, at the Episcopal diocesan conference at Albany, N.Y., addressed the clergy upon the excise question. He said that he was convinced that it was a mistake for the State to exercise any special control over the sale of liquor. He argued that if the State would let the whole matter alone, it would adjust itself according to the sense and sentiment of the community.

Reports from the two leading commercial agencies of New York show little or no change of consequence in the general condition of trade. Unseasonably mild weather is having an adverse influence, especially in some of the Western cities of the States, and through more activity and a better demand is reported in several leading products, this is to some extent offset by a generally lower range of prices. There has been a distinct falling off in the demand for iron and steel, and a severe reaction in prices. On the other hand, a decided improvement has occurred in the trade in woollen goods, with increased orders, and advancing prices. There is also a continued improvement in bank clearings, and the gross earnings of several important railroads. Dry goods are generally in better request.

GENERAL.

France and Italy are sending warships to the Levant.

The Czarina of Russia has given birth to a daughter.

The British squadron in Chinese waters is to be materially strengthened.

Floods have done great damage in parts of France. The River Moselle rose nine feet.

Three French ironclads ran aground in the Mediterranean, but one of them the Formidable, was floated.

It is estimated that the war in Cuba is costing Spain one hundred and forty thousand dollars a day.

A severe earthquake shock has been experienced at Katuna, in Greece, and the inhabitants are panic-stricken.

It is reported that the Armenians in some districts are assuming the aggressive, and are pillaging and murdering the Mussulmans.

The Russian Government intends to coin next year one hundred million roubles in gold, and twenty-five million roubles in silver.

The English mission near Jerusalem was attacked by a mob. The missionaries escaped, but some of the servants were killed.

Advices from Zeitoun, Asia Minor, say that the Turkish garrison at that place has been compelled to surrender to the Armenians.

A steam launch belonging to the British cruiser Edgar was lost in Japanese waters, and forty-eight men, who were on board, were drowned.

Herr Liebknecht, the Socialist leader and editor, of Breslau, has been sentenced to four months' imprisonment, after having been convicted for lese majeste.

A despatch from Shanghai says that China has agreed that Germany shall occupy one of the islands near the entrance to the seaport of Amoy, for the purpose of establishing a naval yard and a coal depot.

A despatch from Vladivostock says that owing to the presence of the British fleet at Foo-Chow, the Viceroy has executed eight Chinese under suspicion of complicity in missionary murders.

Mustapha Fehmy Pasha has been appointed Prime Minister of Egypt, to succeed Nubar Pasha, who resigned on account of ill-health. He will continue a policy looking towards amity with England.

The proposed line of steamers between Vancouver and New Zealand has been offered by the New Zealand Government a subsidy of thirty thousand pounds a year if the terminal point is in New Zealand, twenty thousand pounds if it is in Australia.

A MOST PECULIAR KING

MOST EXTRAORDINARY POTENTATE IN THE WORLD.

The King of Ashantee, With Whom the British Are Going to War—He Wears a Plug Hat for a Crown, and Has an Umbrella for a Sceptre of State.

King Prempeh, King of Ashantee, and the most extraordinary ruling potentate of the world, has defied the English Government. He has announced his readiness for war, and is now awaiting the arrival of the British troops. The King of Ashantee is the absolute monarch of about three million subjects. They live in the heart of the African forest, a few hundred miles back from the Gold Coast. The king wears a girdle of dry grass around his hips and a 'plug' hat. He owns no crown, but in some way has become possessed of a silk hat, which now does duty as an emblem of sovereignty. He wears earrings. They are of solid gold. He also has other personal adornments of solid gold. His royal ancestors all wore gold earrings, too.

His Majesty lives in a big stone and native brick palace—the only structure of the kind in the kingdom. His Royal Highness sleeps on the floor. The king is several times a millionaire, and it is believed that he has several barrels of gold dust and nuggets. Ashantee is rich in gold. King Prempeh is a bloodthirsty monarch and he is in the habit of making human sacrifices on a wholesale scale. Whenever it pleases him to do so he orders a few hundred subjects to be beheaded. Besides this, during certain religious ceremonies, it is customary to kill subjects. It is this practice which England wants the king to stop. And it is to put an end to these human sacrifices that the British troops will wade into the forest and make war on the king.

It is just twenty-one years since the British Government appropriated $4,000,000 to send out an expedition to bring the King of Ashantee to terms, and before the expedition got back,

AFTER BURNING COOMASSIE,

his capital, it had cost as much more. The English troops under Sir Garnet Wolseley remained only two days in the capital of Ashantee. Before they left the savage potentate agreed to do certain things. That was King Koffee. His successor, the present king of Ashantee, King Prempeh, has not fulfilled these conditions.

There is probably not another African monarch who can cause the British Government so much trouble and expense as the King of Ashantee. He is a very powerful potentate. His people are all born fighters, who would rather fight than eat. The one thing which has always excited the horror and amazement of travellers who have penetrated into this African town, lying a hundred and forty miles back from the Gold Coast, is the Grove of Skulls, where in countless numbers the bones of the victims of the king lie upon the ground with the festering remains of those who have recently been despatched. This spot, where executions have taken place from time immemorial, is in a small grove back of the large market place at Coomassie. The victims are brought to this place with their hands securely tied and they are made dumb by two knives thrust crosswise through the cheeks. The poor wretches are for a time tortured by being pinched, pricked with swords and fired upon at short range with blank cartridges. The powder from these cartridges enters the flesh, causing

EXCRUCIATING AGONY.

Then the executioners, who are fantastically dressed, seize their huge swords and, flourishing them in the air, lop off the heads of the victims, one after another. Then they retire from the scene drenched with blood from head to foot and leaving the bodies lying where they fall. As soon as the executioners retire the vultures swoop down from the trees above and the ground is soon black with them. At night the panthers come and slink away satiated before dawn.

The King of Ashantee is opposed to progress, which he defies. He dislikes roads in his kingdom. When the British under Sir Garnet Wolseley went to Coomassie they had to cut their way through the forest, leaving a fine road behind them. The King of Ashantee agreed to keep this road in good repair. But instead of keeping it open, he let the weeds grow up. Thus the British in the coming war will have to go all over the work again, for, so quick is vegetation in that part of Africa that not even a trace of the original route remains. The recent British Commission to Coomassie had to find its way to the capital through a dense forest. It is in this forest that the British forces will be attacked by the warriors of the King of Ashantee, who are natural bush fighters, armed with the best of

MODERN RIFLES.

The Ashantees are far from being savages, ignorant of modern warfare, and their religion makes them brave to the point of recklessness.

The King of Ashantee is the only monarch who sits on a throne of solid gold. This throne is officially termed a "stool." The royal stool is so heavy that it takes several men to carry it. When the King of Ashantee walks abroad to view the things that are going on in his capital he is followed by servants from the palace bearing the golden stool, in case he should decide to sit down to consider weighty affairs of state.

But even more curious than this is the umbrella of state. Sir Garnet Wolseley captured the umbrella of state of the King of Ashantee when he was in Coomassie in 1874, but it was returned to the beaten monarch before the invaders left. The umbrella of state, which keeps the sun and rain off the head of the King of Ashantee, is a symbol of his authority. It is a sort of African sceptre, being an outward and visible sign of the power which has descended to him "by divine right." A king of Ashantee would as soon think of ruling without an umbrella as a king of England would think of ruling without a crown. It is as necessary a part of the regalia as is a "sword of state" to a European sovereign and far more useful. The umbrella of state of the King of Ashantee has a sort of fringe of

GRINNING SCULLS,

which serve as playful reminders to his auditors of the uses to which their own headpieces may be put. The rest of the umbrella of state is made up of gold, red cloth and bamboo.

The position of Umbrella Carrier to His Majesty is one of importance in the government, and is eagerly sought for by feudatory chiefs. There is, however, some danger connected with it, for, in case the umbrella is not opened quick enough to keep rain or shine off the royal head, the holder of the office is likely to get into trouble.

In place of a crown the King of Ashantee wears an old silk hat. Just as Napoleon issued an order that no one in France but himself could wear the plain chapeau, without which no picture of the Emperor is complete, so Koffee ordered that nobody but himself in Ashantee could wear a silk hat. This law has been maintained by his successor, the present king, who is reported to be even more jealous than was Koffee of the royal prerogative. A West Coast trader who recently returned to the Cape from Coomassie, said:

"The King of Ashantee is attached to an old plug hat which somebody gave him. Seated on the golden stool under the umbrella of state, he presents a funny spectacle, wearing this ancient piece of headgear. In war, however, he wears a special head-dress. The negroes of his kingdom regard the silk hat with awe. Any commissioner whom the British Government may send out there should be equipped with a silk hat. Otherwise he would not be 'in it' with the king in public regard. The neighboring King of Dahomey used to wear an old hat of this kind."

MORE BRITISH SHIPS.

Lord Salisbury Says the Mediterranean Fleet is to be Strengthened.

The Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall is an event of public importance in England because on that occasion Ministers are supposed, more or less, to show forth their policy and their designs for the future. "More or less" may be said advisedly—it is generally "less" that the public gets. Even the civic glories of a Lord Mayor's banquet do not as a rule draw her Majesty's Ministers into a talkative and confiding mood. Both Disraeli and Gladstone were wont on such occasions to show how pleasantly they could talk without saying anything particular, and, on the whole, Lord Salisbury follows in their footsteps. The gravamen of his discourse appears to be that Britain needs more ships, and it may be gathered from his remarks, and from contemporary happenings, that the Mediterranean fleet is to be strengthened. Events both in Turkey and the far East justify this attitude, and there is apparently a further effort to be made to support it by wise additions to Britain's already immense navy. Under these circumstances it would seem to be very desirable that the shipyard strikes, which are serious, should be arranged as speedily as possible. The going out of all the engineers—machinists or engine-fitters as we should call them here—at one of the

GREAT SHIP CENTRES

out of sympathy with the locked-out men, should have a large moal effect, because the order of Amalgamated Engineers to which they belong is one of the most judicious and moderate of the trades unions and has a highly satisfactory record for its general action in the past with regard to disputes. But not only will ships be wanted, but men. The necessity for special training and for special efforts to induce men to undergo it is evident upon a comparison between the guns even of thirty or forty years ago and those of the present day. The cannon with which the greatest victories of the British navy were won were twelve, sixteen, and twenty-four pounders. In the Russian war fifty-six pounders and a few sixty-eight pounders were used. But now ships carry 2,000 pounder guns and more, and the handling and management of these splendid engines of destruction cannot be left to untrained hands. It is true that on the occasion of the breaking out of the Russian war in 1855 the fleet was manned for the first time in the history of the country without recourse to the press-gang. But at the present time not only does it seem necessary that the British authorities should make special efforts to increase the personnal of the navy, but that they should make it as much an object as the providing of more ships.

TROLLEY ACCIDENT AT TORONTO.

Rev. Dr. Shaw, of the Methodist Missionary Society Badly Hurt.

A despatch from Toronto, says:—Rev. John Shaw, D.D., assistant secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, was the victim of a trolley accident at Richmond and Yonge streets, at about 6 o'clock on Friday night. He was riding his bicycle across the car tracks and did not see a car coming from the north. Being somewhat deaf, Mr. Shaw did not hear the warning of the bell, and the car knocked him down. He was picked up on the guard and carried about 30 yards. The fall had rendered him insensible, and the police ambulance conveyed him to the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. Alexander Mills, 418 Ontario street. Drs. Doolittle and Boultbee dressed the injuries, which consisted of a bad scalp wound and a slight concussion.

He Didn't Go There.

Fond Mother—Dear me, what's the matter now?

Married Daughter—Boo-hoo—husband has deceived me.

Fond Mother—The brute! How do you know?

Married Daughter—He—boo—hoo—he said he was—was going to the church fair last night, and—and he didn't. He went somewhere else.

Mother—Who told you he went somewhere else?

Daughter—No one. This morning I found some—some money in his pockets—boo-hoo-hoo!