NOTES AND COMMENTS

Bills to tax bachelors have for some time been a regular feature of the legislative year in some countries. Originally such bills were treated as bits of airy comedy designed to relieve the high seriousness of the sessions. They were put on the list of "crank" bills and added temporarily to the gayety of the nation. To-day bachelor tax propositions are taken a little more seriously, though no one expects them to be enacted into law —as yet. What the third phase may be is another story.

It may be recalled that Kaiser William himself not many months ago, in lightly discussing the heavy deficits in the imperial finances and the necessity of additional taxes, intimated that bachelors might be subjected to a fine or duty not only as a means of increasing the revenues but as a preventive of undue cultivation of single blessedness—or single misery. True, the statesman of the fatherland, when the time for action came, displayed weakness and left the bachelors severely alone. But the august royal sanction of the idea has tended to make it respectable if not immediately practical, and doubtless henceforth the crop of bachelor tax bills will be richer and finer.

Already the dispatches tell of bills to distribute the proceeds of such taxation among the needy spinsters, of bills to require bachelors to propose at least once a year —provided there are eligible subjects to "pop" to—of bills to establish state bureaus to find suitable wives for willing but unfortunate bachelors, to give first aid to the timid, and so on. There is logic or consistency in some of these bold propositions. If bachelors are to be fined, it is but fair to help such as are merely lacking in push or opportunity. As for the confirmed and contumacious species one can only advise them to circulate Bernard Shaw literature among the benighted lawmakers and convert the would-be taxers to the ultra-modern doctrine that in courtship and flirting woman is really the aggressor, men man being the unconscious victim of feminine subtlety and his own vanity and obtuseness. From the modern viewpoint it would be utterly unfair to tax men whom no woman would have on any terms.

POISON IN THE COFFEE.

The Climax to a Lover's Quarrel in Paris.

A wealthy young man named Bayard, and a girl in poorer circumstances, Mlle. Therese Glenisson, supped together one night recently at a restaurant in the Rue Faubourg Montmartre, Paris. The girl caused the room they engaged to be filled with flowers.

A quarrel had arisen owing to the girl's discovery that she had a rival in her lover's affection. A reconciliation had followed, and the waiter who served the meal remarked that the two were on the best of terms.

No sound being heard from the room when the time come for the closing of the restaurant, the manager entered and found the girl dead and the young man dying. Investigation showed that Mlle. Glenisson had put poison in her lover's coffee and afterwards committed suicide in a similar manner.

LONDON'S CLOUD.

From the point of view of efforts to dissipate the London fog, an important question is, How high does the fog extend? Dr. William J. Lockyer has recently investigated the subject with the aid of a balloon. The great city being covered with its famous mantle of dusty vapor, he ascended, with friends, in the balloon Valkyrie, from Battersea. At the height of 2,500 feet they just topped the fog, which from their lofty point of observation appeared as a magnificent sea of cloud. An interesting photograph of London's cloudy double was made from an elevation of 3,000 feet above Bexley Heath. On this occasion the fog extended widely over the country round London, and Doctor Lockyer remarks that it is now important to examine from a balloon a fog whose lower parts are practically confined to the limits of the city.

PICTURESQUE RESIGNATION.

Boy (to tramp)—"Don't you get awful tired of doin' nothin', mister?"

Tramp—"Terrible! But I never complains. Everybody has their troubles!"

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE IT

The Finest Sight on Earth Is Held to Be a Good Fight.

And Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeeig, who had done mighty deeds * * * went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow.—II. Samuel xxiii. 20.

He was a valiant man, and the son of a valiant man and the grandson of a man who had done mighty deeds. The valiant man loves such a fight. This is the attraction of the most violent forms of athletics. It is the element of conflict which constitutes so much of the attractiveness of mountaineering. I never saw a mountain in my life which I did not want to scale, and I understand perfectly how it was that after some laments on the limited opportunities for climbing in England, a sporting paper announced that there were three or four places in the lake country where a man could comfortably break his neck. I was not in the least surprised to be told that the hotels in those places made a fortune within the next twelve months.

It is the finest sight on earth—the very finest sight on earth — a good fight. Only, mind you, it must be a good fight!

FIGHT THE FIGHT OF FAITH;

there is nothing like it. They wrong man greatly who say that he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the heart of man. Some of us find the very first conflict of all hard enough —the fight with self. There is a passion which grips you, my brother, with what seems a grip stronger than death and hell, the pride of life, the desire of the eyes, the craving of the flesh—you know its intensity. But I bid you fight! You are a valiant man and the son of a valiant man and you are too good a man to go down to destruction before a giant vice. There is that in you which is worth too much to man and God for failure now. I believe in you and good men will believe in you and God believes in you; you shall slay your lion, too!

A big city is not an easy place for a man who has lions to kill. Its temptations are many. Its cosmopolitonism creates a certain atmosphere—an atmosphere always non-religious, often positively irreligious. It loves pleasure only too well. And countless hosts within this city are drunk with

A HIDEOUS LUST FOR GOLD.

We are set here in this city for a purpose. We have to witness the power of the spirit of God over human hearts, over evil passions, over sinister temptations, over the inducements and seductions of material things, over all the facts and forces of sin. We have to keep a clear light shining in any dark place; we have to keep the flag of righteousness and purity flying here; we have to maintain the vision of the ideal before us. It may be an awkward place and a bad day for the idealist, for the visionary, for the puritan. But the place of valor is the place where you live and work. "Now" is the accepted time, the heroic time, the chivalric time; and I will trust you to slay a lion in a pit on a snowy day.

"Arrest your knaves and dastards" goes forth the old command. And to the question "How?" our modern prohpet has his answer ready:

"Make yourself an honest man; then there will be one rascal less in the world."

Rev. Charles F. Aked, D. D.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, FEB. 7.

Lesson VI. True and False Brotherhood. Golden Text, Prov. 12.22.

Verse 32. The multitude of them that believed — Now numbering many thousands in the city of Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity.

Of one heart—Having a common purpose in life, and interested alike each in the other's welfare.

Had all things common—A real, though entirely voluntary, community of goods.

35. Distribution was made — The administration of the one common fund was left to the apostles, and was no inconsiderable burden added to their many other responsibilities of leadership in so large a community of believers.

36. And Joseph—Having made a general statement concerning the disposition of lands and houses by those who believed, Luke proceeds to point out certain notable individuals who did not exempt themselves from the general rule.

Barnabas—The same who later became the companion of Saint Paul on the latter's first missionary journey. He was a native of the island of Cyprus and a member of the tribe of Levi.

37. Laid it at the apostles' feet—Turned the money over to them to be used for the best interests of the whole Christian community.

5. 1. But a certain man — The following incident is cited by way of contrast with the general spirit which prevailed among the jerusalem believers, and for the sake of pointing out, as the author does in the last verse of our lesson, the influence of the sad incident on the entire Christian community.

Ananias, with Sapphira—Mentioned only here in the New Testament narrative.

2. Kept back part of the price—The word "part," is left to be supplied in the original. The context implies that the action of Ananias in thus withholding part of the money realized from the sale of his possession was secret and covered up by an attempt at deception, his wife also being a party to the action.

3. But Peter said—The discerning apostle was quick to discover the hypocrisy of this man.

To lie to—Or, "to deceive."

The Holy Spirit—The manifest presence of the Divine Spirit in the fellowship of the Christian believers made the crime of Ananias exceptionally grievous.

4. After it was sold, was it not in thy power?—Peter's question makes it clear that the surrender of private possessions for the common good was entirely voluntary on the part of each individual, no form of compulsion being resorted to.

Conceived this thing in thy heart —Deliberately thought out the plan to deceive. It was not, therefore, a crime committed under the stress of a sudden impulse, but one premeditated in its every detail.

Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God—This earnest arraignment of the guilty man implies that the attempt to deceive God was, in this case as always, an utter failure. Men may deceive their fellow-men; they cannot hide the truth from God.

5. Ananias hearing these words fell down—The words of Peter were both an arraignment and a condemnation, implying impending judgment, the fulfillment of which was not long delayed.

Gave up the ghost—The word for "expired" here used is a technical medical term of rare use, and as such one of the many little indications found in the book of Acts supporting the inference that the author of the book was a physician.

6. Young—Or, younger. The emphasis on the age of those who carried the body of Ananias to its burial indicates a distinction observed in the early Christian Church in the division of responsibilities and forms of service, by which positions of trust and responsibility fell upon the older men, while the younger men were called upon to fill positions requiring active manual service of a less responsible character.

Buried him—Immediately, or at least upon the same day, according to the usual necessary custom in a semitropical climate.

7. Three hours after—After the burial referred to in the preceding verse.

8. Answered unto her—Responding to her look of inquiry with his direct question, intended no doubt to give Sapphira an opportunity to confess her participation in her husband's conspiracy, and thus escape the fate which had befallen him.

Yea, for so much—For so deliberate and overt a falsehood under the circumstances there was no excuse.

9. How is it that ye have agreed together?—Peter again emphasizes the fact that the guilt of both husband and wife lay primarily in the premeditated character of the crime which they had committed.

11. Great fear came upon the whole church—The effect of the sad incident upon the community both explains Luke's purpose in including the incident in his narrative, and at the same time suggests a reason and a justification for the severity of the punishment meted out to the offenders. In the light of what had transpired others who might possibly have been tempted to like duplicity were restrained from yielding to the temptation.

MAROONED SAILORS.

Spend Three Weary Months on a Desert Island.

News of a thrilling adventure of Japanese sailors marooned in the Pacific was received recently at Liverpool.

Stress of weather compelled the Commercial Pacific Cable Company's schooner Florence Ward to deviate from her course. The vessel was sailing from Honolulu to the cable station at Midway Island, but had to run for Lee Hermes Island, 80 miles to the south-east of Midway Island, for shelter, and thus became instrumental in effecting the rescue of three marooned Japanese sailors, saving them from slow but certain death.

Originally there were four men in the party, but one died—a fate the others must have shared but for the providential arrival of the Florence Ward. This vessel, which carried supplies for the cable station, noticed signals of distress from Lee Hermes Island, and a boat was put off.

The crew discovered, on reaching shore, three Japanese sailors, two of whom were suffering from scurvy, while the third was in a collapsed condition and quite unable to walk. They were taken on board the Florence Ward, and after receiving treatment related an astounding tale of their sufferings on the island. They stated that for three months they had been without food, except fish and the flesh of sea birds. No fresh water was obtained on the islet, and they were compelled to drink crudely distilled sea water. They belonged to the Japanese schooner Kloso Maru, of Shinagawa, Tokio, which landed them on July 1. The vessel had departed a few days later, leaving one month's provisions for them and intending to return later and take them off. She never came back, and it is thought that she was overwhelmed and lost in a hurricane.

Soon after the departure of the Kioso Maru, a terriffic storm burst over the island; huge seas carried away the effects of the marooned men, as well as their supplies. They subsisted on what remained as long as they could; but eventually one of the party succumbed as a result of exposure and improper food, and the others were critically ill when found. They are to be sent to Honolulu.

A LION HUNTER'S STORY

HOW LIONS ARE SHOT IN THE WILDS OF AFRICA.

F. C. Selous, Famous Lion-Killer, Talks of Roosevelt's Hunting Expedition.

Mr. F. C Selous, the famous lion-killer, explains that while he has collected in London the camp and other equipment for Mr. Roosevelt's hunting expedition and will go with him to Mombasa, where they arrive on April 22, they will not shoot together in East Africa and Uganda.

"Mr. Roosevelt's party, comprising his son, Mr. Cunninghame (an expert guide), and two American naturalists," said Mr. Selous, who was visited at his home at Worplesdon, England, "will go one way. Mr. Wm. McMillan will join me in striking out in another. No doubt, however, we may come into touch more than once with the President's party.

HOW LIONS ARE SHOT.

"Nearly 150 native bearers will carry the President's equipment. They will travel for a week or ten days, making for some point where game is found; there they will halt for a week, or even a month at a time. In East Africa they should find plenty of giraffes, antelopes, buffaloes and lions. Elephants will be encountered more in Uganda. Small-bore rifles will be carried for antelopes and giraffes; these, with expanding bullets, will be used for lions; and for killing elephants a heavy gun carrying a cordite-loaded cartridge will be taken.

"Lions you either come across accidentally, risking a shot at close quarters, or you go out on horseback very early in the morning on a high plateau in the hope of catching a lion which has delayed too long in feeding and cannot get back to cover. When you are overtaking the beast he generally comes to a halt and faces you, growling. That is the moment when you slip off your horse and shoot him. Sometimes the lion will charge at you. If he does, you gallop out of the way and wait for another opportunity. If he charges while you are off your horse, and you fail to hit him as he comes at you, it may be awkward.

VICIOUS ELEPHANTS.

"The party will find antelopes all over the plains. Giraffes, which feed on the boughs of the trees, will have to be tracked in the well-wooded localities. The party should be able to learn from the natives the haunts of the elephant herds in the Uganda forests. When you wound an elephant it will often make a savage rush at you. While you are shooting one of a herd, too, you may not notice another among the trees, which may make a sudden dash at you. Old female elephants are notably vicious.

"Probably Mr. McMillan and myself will not hunt for more than three months. The President, however, will prolong his expedition for nearly a year. One of his chief objects is to hand over to American museums specimens of the animals he shoots."

You may guess what a woman is, but that's your limit.

And it sometimes happens that a man is married to his boss.

LOWTHER HOLDS THE KEY

BRITISH AMBASSADOR POWERFUL AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

Has Won the Confidence of the Sultan, the Young Turks and the Populace.

Sir Gerald Lowther, who during the last twelve months has received Knighthood with the Star of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, besides being appointed to membership in the Privy Council and promoted from the post of Minister Plenipotentiary at Tangier to that of Ambassador at Constantinople, with emoluments of nearly $50,000 a year, a metropolitan palace and a suburban country seat, both fully furnished and equipped, and a steam yacht, all provided by the Government, is now slated for still further honors. He arrived at Stamboul at an exceedingly critical juncture, and has played his cards so well that today he is admittedly the most influential and successful of all the foreign Ambassadors accredited to the Sublime Porte.

HE IS POPULAR.

To-day, for the first time since the days of Sir William White, who died some fifteen years ago or more, Great Britain is once more the predominant foreign power at Constantinople, Sir Gerald having completely displaced the German Ambassador, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein. Sir Gerald has managed to acquire the confidence not only of the Turkish Government, but also of the leaders of the Young Turks, and even of the Sultan himself; is acclaimed by the populace whenever he shows himself anywhere in the street; is serenaded about three times a week, while, although the junior of the other Ambassadors in date of appointment, is nevertheless treated by them as their dean, since all the metings of the Ambassadors for any concerted diplomatic action assemble under his roof.

It is to Sir Gerald's restraining influence and to his advice that are ascribed the remarkable absence of bloodshed following the coup d'etat —bloodshed, which would certainly have occurred had the Young Turks carried out their original intention of wreaking vengeance upon those at whose hands they had

SUFFERED PERSECUTION.

Much of the regard accorded to him by his foreign colleagues is due to the conviction that they are all indebted to him for the extraordinary maintenance of law and of order at Constantinople during the last few months. He is likewise believed to have been instrumental in averting war between Turkey and Bulgaria, resulting from the latter's declaration of independence, and from her seizure of the Rumelian branch of the Orient Railroad, and it is understood that at the present moment he is devoting his efforts to the prevention of any hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and Austria.

It is no exaggeration to assert that Lowther holds the key to the crisis now existing between Vienna and Stamboul in connection with the Turkish boycott of Austrian imports, which is inflicting such incalculable damage upon the trade and industry of the Dual Monarchy.

CHRISTIANS OF THE NILE.

Interesting Relics Discovered in Upper Egypt.

An interesting discovery of Early Christian remains has recently been made at Wad-el-Hadad on the Blue Nile, a few miles north of Sennar, while the foundations of a rest house for the Irrigation Department were being dug. A number of graves were found containing skeletons, with feet to the east. Round the head of each was a quantity of pottery. On one of them is the Coptic processional cross and the same emblem is scratched inside the lips of the jars, where it is associated with two other Christian emblems —the fish and the palm-branch. On the neck of one of the jars is a mason's mark, and another of the jars, which are of red ware, has a spout as well as a handle. A comparison of the pottery with that found on Nubian sites between the first and second Cataracts makes it probable that it should be dated in the seventh or eighth century A. D. The pottery has been sent to the Khartoum Museum.

At present very little is known of the history of Christianity in these regions, and we must look to excavation to throw light upon it. A quarter of an hour's walk from the graves are two mounds called by the natives Beyt-el-Anak, "The House of Anak" (or pre-Mahommedan people), which doubtless, mark the site of an old Christian church and monastery. Excavation would probably bring to light Early Christian inscriptions.

A poor complexion worries a woman more than a poor intellect.

But a man who leads a double life never does two men's work.

The man who is looking for trouble always finds it—and then some.

FROM ERIN'S GREEN ISLE

NEWS BY MAIL FROM IRELAND'E SHORES.

Happenings in the Emerald Isle of Interest to Irishmen.

The Castlestrange estate, Co. Roscommon, was purchased by the congested districts board.

Damages at £70 were awarded to Henry Totten, Belfast, against the corporation, for street car injuries.

A fierce gale on the County Down coast swept over Newcastle, drove a vessel ashore and caused serious damage to many buildings.

Thomas Smith, a postman of the Greenlaw district, is retiring after a service of 38 years, during which he travelled upwards of 200,000 miles.

A blind man, Andrew Hamilton, aged 75 years, and his wife, died within a week of each other at Kyle's Brae, Coleraine, from heart disease.

There are now about 100 persons under bail in the County Galway district for participating in cattle drives.

Mr. Carnegie has given $5,000 for the training home for orphan girls opened at Culmore, Derry, through the exertions of the Duchess of Abercorn.

A crowd of 1,500 people assembled to prevent an estate bailiff serving notices for rent on several families at Ballinaglera, Co. Leitrim.

At Dublin, the jury disagreed in the trial of Matthew Purcell, for the murder of a 7-year-old boy, Arthur Fox, who was found dead in an alley.

Lord Dunraven has given a generous donation towards the cost of renovating the Adare Methodist church, which will be re-opened free of debt.

Kilrush Guardians are considering the advisability of sending the workhouse children to board outside, and have them attend the schools in the town.

During the year ending March last the number of men, women and children in receipt of poor law relief was 219,220. This is one-sixteenth of the entire population of Ireland.

The death occurred at Belfast recently of George Herbert Brown, one of the best-known linen manufacturers, a former high sheriff of County Down, and a prominent yachtsman.

The Wicklow fire brigade is now, says the Wicklow People, thoroughly organized, and an up-to-date set of appliances have been procured by the urban council at a cost of about $1,000.

Arthur Protheroe, 14 years of age, while delivering goods on a hand truck in Neath, was struck violently under the chin by the truck handles swinging around. His neck was dislocated and death instantly followed.

King Edward has awarded bronze medals for gallantry for saving life at sea to eighteen fishermen of Valentia, Co. Kerry. Medals have also been given to two coast guardsmen and two civilians for bravery at Ballydavid Head, in September last.

HIS SUPPER COST $1,600.

Englishman is Robbed of that Sum in Paris.

An unfortunate experience has befallen a London visitor to Paris, who has been robbed of $1,600.

While in a restaurant in the Place Pigalle, some people, one an Italian, entered into conversation with him, and the chance acquaintanceship ended in the party having supper together.

After supper the Englishman lost consciousness, and when he recovered he found himself in a cab, which had stopped opposite his hotel. His new-found friends, however, had vanished, and he missed his purse containing $1,600, his watch and other personal jewelry.

In his perplexity he turned to the cabman, who could only say that some well-dressed men had placed the Englishman in his vehicle, and told the cabman to drive to his hotel, which they named. The victim has placed the matter in the hands of the police.

IRISH ARE THRIFTY.

Deposits in Joint Stock Banks Constantly Growing.

Official statistics made up to the end of June last show that the deposits and cash balances in Irish joint stock banks have increased every year since 1888, with the exception of 1897, and in some years by large figures. In 1888 the amount was £30,310,000, in 1907 £48,067,000, and in 1908 £50,596,000.

The Postoffice Savings Bank figures have risen from £3,128,000 in 1888 to £10,637,000 in 1907; the total for 1908 is £10,000 less, but this is the only decrease in the twenty years.

There is now a total of £38,210,000 of Guaranteed Land stock, Guaranteed 2¾ per cent. stock (land purchase act, 1903), and War stock, on which dividends are payable at the Bank of Ireland.