

IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

A SUMMARY of the business done by the railroads of the United States during the year 1894 shows a result that is of interest beyond the limits of the world of finance. Its striking, almost startling, feature is the fact that with nearly a thousand miles of new lines in operation, American railroad companies earned about a hundred and fifty millions of dollars less than in the previous twelvemonth.

This colossal loss falls, of course, upon their stockholders, their employees, and the manufacturers from whom they purchase rails, cars, and other supplies. Labor is the greatest loser; while dividends may have fallen off by \$30,000,000, there must have been a decline of more than \$100,000,000 in the wages paid by the companies and by the producers of the material they use. But all this is only a small part of the industrial suffering indicated by the figures given. It is reckoned by authorities on railroad finance that roughly speaking, two thirds of the income of our lines is earned by hauling freight; and that every dollar paid for freightage represents, on an average, the transportation of a ton of goods. Dividing the loss of \$150,000,000 in the proportion given, we may assume that \$100,000,000 of it fell upon the freight receipts. This implies that the volume of traffic decreased by 100,000,000 tons. Putting the average worth of a ton of goods at ten dollars—probably too low a figure—we find that the railroads handled less by \$1,000,000,000 in value than in 1893, and that the production of our various industries—the agencies that make the country's wealth—was diminished by that vast amount.

Such a depression is an extraordinary incident in our industrial history. That it is nothing more than an incident, that it will soon be obliterated by new and continued expansion, we fully believe.

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THE supreme court of a Western State recently rendered a decision, in a murder case, that gives legal recognition to the mysterious phenomena which, for want of a better name, we call hypnotism, or mesmerism. As reported in the newspapers, the facts are these. Last May Thomas McDonald, without apparent reason or provocation, shot and killed Thomas Patton near Winfield, Kansas. Charged with murder, McDonald's defense was that he had been hypnotized by one Anderson Gray, and was neither morally nor legally responsible for the deed. He was acquitted, and—as a logical consequence—Gray was arrested, tried, and found guilty of murder in the first degree, though he had not even been present when the crime occurred. His counsel appealed the case, and the highest judiciary of the State has affirmed the judgment of the district court.

The decision is, so far as we know, the first that gives any legal status to modern theories

and experiments upon the control of one person's will by another's. It opens up an interesting field of speculation upon the definitions of personal responsibility, and a somewhat disquieting vista of the possibilities of crime committed through hypnotized agents.

In the middle ages, occult powers often figured in the courts, and criminal law was as much concerned with magic and sorcery as was medicine with such mysterious ailments as possession by the devil. With the advent of modern enlightenment, belief in the supernatural faded, and science refused to recognize what it could not explain. When Mesmer first asserted the possibility of an occult influence exerted by one individual upon another, his "animal magnetism" was ridiculed by the orthodox authorities of the time, although the people of Paris flocked to receive medical treatment from him. A commission appointed by the French government, and a committee of the Academy, successively investigated the new theories and declared them worthless.

Today we are better informed and more just. We admit that Mesmer, in spite of his tinge of quackery, was an original and courageous speculator, a pioneer in the field in which later psychologists have made interesting and important discoveries. Medical science fully recognizes this mysterious force which he was the first to identify and name, though it hesitates as to the expediency of its use. The law has now taken cognizance of its possible bearing upon the gravest questions of personal responsibility. And when we come to understand it more fully, we may learn that its mental and physical influence is more far reaching than we suspect.

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WITH one Congress and forty four State Legislatures to wrestle with the complex problems of government, it is not strange that many very extraordinary bills are framed, and that some of them become law. American ingenuity is strikingly illustrated by the skill some of our Solons display in discovering abuses and devising statutory means of remedying them. An Illinois lawmaker, who apparently regards bachelors as the root of all evil, has proposed to levy a heavy tax on all single men between the ages of thirty two and sixty five. In order, however, to be lenient to offenders who see the error of their ways, and attempt, even unsuccessfully, to amend them, his bill provides that a bachelor who can present proof that he has proposed marriage to no less than three women shall be exempted from the tax.

So much for social reform. The purification of politics might be simultaneously achieved by a New York bill which aimed to make it a jailable offense to ask a candidate for office to buy a ball ticket. Trade, too, offers a fertile field to the genius of legislative experiment.

Another Illinois statesman has attempted to invoke heavy penalties upon dry goods stores that sell anything but dry goods. One measure introduced at Albany makes it a misdemeanor to sell any goods at less than cost; another enacts that no druggist shall sell a patent medicine until he has first personally tried its effects. We hear—but this is probably a piece of newspaper humor—of a Western Senator who, having encountered a tin tack in a section of mince pie upon which he was lunching, framed a bill making it a crime punishable with two years' imprisonment and a fine of fifty dollars to adulterate pies with tacks. Such a proposition would scarcely be more absurd than many that have actually and seriously been made.

Silly legislation of this sort can hardly be productive of any very disastrous result; but it wastes the time of our lawmaking bodies, and tends to diminish public respect for the law by cumbering the statute books with acts that cannot be enforced.

WE are constantly told that this is an ultra practical age; that we judge everything by the utilitarian standard; that we tend toward sordidness in business, lack of ideality in the arts, and an exaltation of worldly affairs over spiritual things.

There is some truth in the charge, though those who make it are often guilty of exaggeration. We are a practical generation, yet sentiment and ideality have by no means perished from the face of the earth. And practicality is not an unmixt evil, nor utilitarianism a synonym for total depravity.

Glance, for instance, at the modern trend of our religious and charitable activities. That the practical spirit is increasingly felt in this wide and important field, no one can deny; that its influence has been for good, very few will question. The church of today is even more important as a focus of benevolent energies than as a devotional center. It has come into more intimate relations with the world, into closer contact with human life. It no longer teaches that there is a wall of division between sacred things and secular things, and that a man must dwell on one side of the line or the other. It no longer tells us that the body is vile and accursed, and that all our thought and care must be for the soul alone. It recognizes that the God who created the soul created the body also; that the human frame has its proper dignity, and should command its proper respect; that a squalid and stunted bodily life is in itself a sin; that physical well being is the first step, almost the prerequisite, to mental and moral well being.

All this is suggested by reading a card recently issued by the Charity Organization Society, of New York. The document is a striking contrast to the familiar "tracts" which an older generation of mission workers was wont to scatter in unlimited quantities as a panacea for the ills of the sick, the criminal, the ignorant, and the hungry poor. It sets forth what

may be called the gospel of utilitarian missionary work, and it is happily entitled a "Health and Happiness Chart." Its doctrines are brief and clear statements of the cost and value of the cheapest and most wholesome foods, with instructions upon cardinal points in preparing them, and a series of maxims like the following:

Digestion is assisted by cheerfulness.

To cook indifferently fills the hospitals with sick children and the saloons with ill fed men.

There are twenty three of these apothegms, and their initials form an acrostic that reads, "Trust in God and do the right." The trend of latter day philanthropy is well instanced by this effort to promote religious faith and moral rectitude by a common sense assault upon the commonplace evils of physical discomfort.

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THE antitoxine war, started some months ago by the great Virchow in Berlin, has been transplanted to New York, and from present indications it looks as if it was to be carried on all over the United States. The great news agencies which faithfully report every important and every unimportant item of interest from hour to hour, are acting the part of the advance guard. A few weeks ago all the papers announced that a young woman in Brooklyn had died suddenly after one injection of antitoxine. The particular drug used with such fatal result was of German manufacture, the kind condemned by Dr. Virchow. That gentleman, as far as is known, has had no occasion to investigate the French compound of the same description. If he had done so, he would probably have raised his voice against the use of that, too.

At various American hospitals both kinds have been on trial for some time, and many physicians have expressed themselves in favor of the drug. At a recent meeting of medical men in New York, five papers in praise of antitoxine were read, but at the conclusion of the last essay one of the physicians present, Dr. Joseph E. Winters, rose to say that for three months he had studied its effects carefully in the Willard Parker Hospital, but had utterly failed to find a single case where it had had a healthy influence on diphtheria. "On the other hand," he continued, "I have found many where death has been due directly to the use of the drug." Dr. Winters refused to believe the statistics of antitoxine advocates (among them those of Dr. Biggs, of the New York board of health), and attempted to prove their general untrustworthiness. He warned the public against submitting to indiscriminate antitoxine inoculation, as it is now carried on, and said: "There are always two things to be considered. One is the individual susceptibility to the drug. Miss Valentine, of Brooklyn, died on account of her susceptible state. The other is the bacteriological diagnosis of diphtheria. Where the bacteriological diagnosis, in the absence of clinical evidences, quarantines the house, and separates a family from relatives and friends, it is a sin against man. But when it forces an unfortunate victim into an infec-

tious hospital, and renders him liable to death, it becomes a crime."

While the doctors are fighting about antitoxine in this fashion, it might be well for the public to keep its eyes open and profit by the crumbs of wisdom that fall from the learned men's table.

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WE spoke last month in this department of the series of defeats recently encountered by the champions of the political enfranchisement of women. Since the rebuff they received last year before the New York constitutional convention, others have followed in Kansas, South Dakota, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts; and now the Legislature of Maine, after passing a suffrage bill through one house, has killed it in the other.

This last incident is a disappointing one, and yet it is also encouraging, for it shows progress. Fifteen years ago such a partial success could not have occurred. Propositions for the enfranchisement of women were then regarded simply as a joke, as material for humor; today they command earnest attention. The movement has gone beyond the ridicule stage, through which many another great and ultimately successful movement has had to pass. It continues to advance, and the opposition of ingrained prejudice and of the baser elements of politics cannot permanently stay its progress.

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THE abandonment of the free pew system by one of the most important churches in Brooklyn has attracted more than local attention as a setback to a movement that has hitherto been regarded as successful. About a year ago the abolition of pew rents in a prominent New York house of worship—that of the Ascension—following upon similar action by other churches, was widely commented on as promising the further spread of the free system. Now, after full trial, the rector of St. Peter's, in Brooklyn, declares that it has made it impossible for him to meet the necessary expenses of his ministry; and if this is the experience of a leading religious body in the fourth city of the United States, how can smaller and less wealthy congregations succeed where the Brooklyn church has failed?

Probably the most widely known champion of the free pew system is Dr. William S. Rainsford, head of the largest and most active Episcopal congregation in New York. Dr. Rainsford regards it as a matter of principle, of necessity. "Where people have homes of their own," he says, "or in small cities and towns, it may be well to have paid sittings. The time has come, however, when in order to catch and hold the masses free churches are an absolute necessity. There should be no distinction between poverty and riches in the church. The occupant of the tenement should be as free to go in and sit down as the man who can afford to pay for a pew. Are we prepared to bar out the larger portion of our population? If not, let them know that they are welcome to a sit-

ting in any of our churches. I firmly believe that nothing but a free church system will reach and influence the poor and lower classes."

It cannot be denied that on the question of principle the free system is the more attractive; yet there is much to be said on the other side. It is urged that regularly rented sittings give a closer connection with the church, and a local attachment that may aid devotion; that they enable the clergyman to note the absence of members detained by sickness or otherwise; that the rentals may be so graduated as to accommodate all applicants, whatever their circumstances; that even rented pews are assigned under "conditions of Christian hospitality," and that their holders are expected to welcome strangers when possible.

Such are, in brief, the arguments from a religious standpoint. On the monetary side of the question, the decision must be left to individual experience. It is certainly an advantage, as a matter of business, to have the assigned revenue produced by pew rentals; yet churches may succeed financially, and may fail financially on either plan. Perhaps more would succeed and fewer would fail if we had more large churches and fewer small ones. The consolidation of congregations that now struggle for independent existence into large united bodies might often end the controversy as to paid or free sittings by rendering the exaction of pew rents unnecessary.

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THE New York *Sun* has repeated the suggestion, several times offered before, that the renowned of James Fenimore Cooper should entitle that pioneer of American literature to the honor of a suitable monument in one of our great cities—preferably in New York, the literary center of the country, and the metropolis of the State in which Cooper lived and wrote. It is indeed scarcely creditable to our reputation for public spirit and appreciation of merit that nearly half a century should have passed since Cooper's death without the erection of such a memorial.

Cooper was the Sir Walter Scott of American literature. The comparisons that have often been instituted between the author of "Waverley" and the creator of *Leatherstocking* are not wholly to the advantage of the former. No less an authority than Mr. Thackeray has recorded his opinion that Cooper deserves the higher place in the realm of fiction. The most imposing monument ever dedicated to an author is the splendid Gothic structure in Edinburgh that bears the name of Scott. Have we not sufficient pride in the heroes of our own literature to pay honor to the grand old American of Otsego Lake?

In New York's chief park we have the effigies of English, Scotch, Irish, and German authors—one of them a copy of the figure that forms part of the Scott monument in Edinburgh. American writers are represented there by one unimportant statue of an obscure poet. A fitting memorial of Cooper would be a welcome addition.



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"Ophelia."

From the painting by C. Makovsky.