

Marinelli, the serpent man, is at present exciting great attention from the scientists of Europe. He is a phenomenal creature, in that he appears to be possessed of no bones, but recent investigations have shown that his skill in contorting himself lies in the fact that from his earliest years every attention has been given to developing his muscles, while his bone system has been wholly neglected. In fact the man is but a mass of muscles enclosed in a soft elastic skin. His grace and agility surpass anything before seen on the contortionist stage of Europe.

President Hypolite, of the Republic of Hayti, is by no means amicably-minded towards rebellious subjects. A few days ago an attempt was made to assassinate him as he was leaving his palace at Port au Prince. Within fifteen minutes the three conspirators were arrested and executed by order of the President, who seems to have viewed the whole affair in a curious third-personal light. The incident recalls the story of an ancient Spanish conqueror, who was called upon when dying to forgive his enemies. He retorted—"I have no enemies, for I have shot them all."

The people of New South Wales are by no means content with adopting the customs and laws of their civilized contemporaries. Instead they prefer to experiment with and thoroughly test any modern idea which seems plausible. The latest innovation has been the adoption of the single-tax law, by means of which the revenue is to be raised by the direct taxation of land values, irrespective of improvements. As both the Premier of the Colony and the leader of the Opposition are in full sympathy with the movement, there is no doubt that a fair trial will be given to the new system.

Mrs Kate Field, in her bright Washington paper, expresses herself with much point and aptness on the vexed question of pensions. Exception is taken to the fact that a man, his wife and children, may receive pensions from the Government, because the man has at some time served for a term of sixty days in the army. The man may have received no injury, but in any case he can claim a pension for life. The suggestion is made that the Government, instead of assuming the enormous burden which it has borne in the past, should only pension those whose earning or self-supporting capacity has been injured in service.

Dr. Cornelius Herz, who has been frequently mentioned in connection with the Panama scandal, is well known in the United States, where he has been found to be a most audacious swindler. In 1874 he made a brilliant social and professional appearance in San Francisco. He induced two well-known merchants to lend him some ninety thousand dollars, and their widows now hold his valuable note for the amount. One old gentleman, a millionaire patient, was worked upon to the extent of a cool hundred thousand, and numbers of less wealthy men lost smaller sums through his wiles. His early training seems to have stood him in good stead in his recent financial actions.

The inhabitants of Sanger have not only suffered greatly from the volcanic eruption which rent asunder their island, but the heavy rains which have fallen incessantly since the earthquake have been most disastrous to the uninjured crops. The cocoanut plantations have been much damaged by both the eruption and the dampness, and it will be a full year before another crop of nuts will attain maturity. Meanwhile the Government is endeavoring to induce the people to rebuild, and is offering daily rations of rice to all who wish state aid. The many Chinese residents have departed in haste to the Flowery Kingdom, being ill-content with the grim humors of Dame Nature towards the sea-girl tale.

Although little appears on the subject in the public prints there is no doubt cholera is again gaining ground in Hamburg. During the last summer four children were stricken with the disease. In the Eppendorf Hospital thirty-eight cases, eight of which are of the most virulent type, are being treated. Meanwhile the emigrants being shut out of the ports of the United States are flocking to Halifax, and it is not at all impossible that they may bring the germs of the disease with them. Every care should be exercised by the authorities, who are responsible for the welfare of our citizens. They should realize that through carelessness or neglect on their part the dread disease might obtain such a foothold on the continent as would bring themselves and our fair city forever into disrepute.

We are always glad to note the successful trial of the co-operative labor scheme, by which both the employer and employed are proportionately benefitted. A year ago a well-known St. John firm of brush and broom-makers adopted a modified form of profit-sharing, which seems to have worked to the satisfaction of all concerned. The scheme in brief is as follows: Interest on capital, allowance for depreciation, cost of management, sinking fund for buildings and one per cent. for the invalid fund are taken off, the remaining profit being divided between capital and labor in the proportions which capital invested or wages paid demand. During the past year, owing to unusual losses and the construction of new buildings, the profit was not large, amounting to between one and two per cent. on the year's earnings, or about a week's extra pay all round. Nearly a hundred of the employees entered willingly into a similar agreement for the coming year, only stipulating that a larger percentage should be set aside for the invalid fund.

Two almond-eyed celestials called on a member of Parliament at Toronto last week with a doleful tale. Their employer, Wah Sing, had disappeared, or rather had been abducted by two unknown persons. As the missing man had \$2000 about his person his countrymen feared that he had been robbed or possibly murdered. The police were put upon the track, and in a few hours Wah Sing was discovered in the county jail. It appears that he had made an arrangement to smuggle one Sam Kee into the States for a consideration of \$1.50, which sum had been paid over. The smuggling scheme fell through, but Sing declined to part with the money, whereupon his brother-celestial handed him over to the grim powers of the law. The police authorities had more than one laugh as new features developed in the curious case.

A Working Woman's Protestant Association has been formed in Montreal, where a large number of young girls and women are employed in the mammoth dry goods and millinery establishments. The object of the Association is to secure and hold positions for needlework women, to help up the weekly wage to a fair amount, and to improve the condition of those who are strangers in the city. It is hoped that a co-operative boarding house for working women will soon be opened, and many of the solitary workers gathered into a homelike residence. A strong effort will be made to prevent the repetition of the starvation wages of previous winters, and tailors and seamstresses, who suffer chiefly from the evils of the sweating system, are to receive every protection from the Association. The Critic wishes a most prosperous career to the new and much-needed Society.

The younger and more Europeanized elements among the Japanese people are extremely dissatisfied with the present state of the civil and commercial codes of their island kingdom. Japan is hampered by many treaties, which hinder her independence in the administration of matters judicial or matters appertaining to the tariff question. A new commercial code was drawn up in 1890, but its adoption was to be postponed until 1893. Now that the term of years has elapsed the more conservative statesmen are desirous to still further delay the alteration of the laws, and a recent vote in both houses of the legislature called for another four years' hoist. The emperor with his cabinet ministers, however, are privileged to ignore the decision of the legislatures, and their well-known sympathy for modern methods of government may result in a reversal of the ballot of the timorous officials.

A very interesting law case, that of Gray & Sons vs. Wilson, has just been settled in Court at Chatham, Ont. Wilson, who seems to have been "a drestful smart" nursery man, obtained an order from Gray for a box, or for boxes of young spruce trees, the whole number not to exceed 300 trees. When the order was filled, the surprised agriculturist found himself possessed of some 7,500 infantile spruces and a bill of gigantic proportions. The Nursery Company refused to accept the return of the surplus trees on the ground that they filled orders by boxes only, and that it was no part of their business to sell a portion of the contents of a box. The irate farmer, backed by many neighbors who had been tricked in the same way, carried the case to court, and has not only won his suit, but has succeeded in unveiling a nest of sharpers who were most successfully carrying on a spruce deal of a most dishonest kind.

The Chinese Government, which has so patiently put up with the insult the people of the United States have heaped upon the heads of the Mongolian emigrants, has at last determined on a fixed policy which may speedily neutralize all the legislation of the Republic. The Hon. Yung Wung has arranged the plan of combat as follows:—An appeal will first be made to the courts of the United States to test the constitutionality of the Exclusion Act. In case the Act is upheld, an appeal will be made to Congress. Should the Congress prove obstinate, the Chinese Government will make formal remonstrance, threatening retaliation if an amicable adjustment of affairs is not made. The retaliation measures agreed upon would be serious injury to the refractory nation, for treaty rights would be annulled, all commercial intercourse checked, and banishment or death would be decreed for the three thousand American missionaries and merchants now residing in China. The policy of Mr. Yung Wung is not a tall suggestion of the infantile name with which he is hampered.

A well organized and most successful effort was made in Toronto during the holiday season to obtain Christmas gifts for the poor children of that great city. A small depot was opened for a couple of weeks with some bright young ladies in charge. Through the newspapers appeals were made to the charitable public to contribute cast-aside clothing or toys. The express companies and several private individuals volunteered to call for parcels at any address throughout the city. Confectionery, nuts and cake came in a steady stream, and gifts for 3,000 children were quickly collected. Then the real work began—the age and condition of each child were ascertained, and a gift selected for each. Clothing was remodelled, old hats furnished up with bright trimmings, new heads put on old dolls, or old heads put on new bodies, until the 3,000 parcels were prepared. A sweet thought was the marking opposite the names of some of the children the word "special." The special children were the invalided or crippled little ones of the city, and the choicest gifts were set aside for their benefit. We trust that by another year a similar experiment may be tried in many of our Canadian cities.

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