

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER.

On Travellers.

OR some time past I have been obliged to make odd excursions out of town, and I found that, as a rule, I happened to travel by trains that were fairly well crowded. Whether this is due to the Easter holiday excursions or otherwise I cannot say, but the fact remains that I have had to go early in order to secure a seat in the first class car. I found that on starting the train was generally packed, but as we passed the first, second, third, and even fourth and fifth stations the car gradually became less occupied, a few getting off at each station. Then when we came within four or five stations of the next large city the seats began to fill up and the room to become scarce. As I said, I made it a rule to go early, to be on board fully twenty minutes before the hour of departure, in order to secure a quiet place from which I would not likely be disturbed. While, I generally amuse myself watching the country scenery through which we pass, or in reading the daily papers, I always find time and opportunity to study the people around me, and I am even now at loss whether a fairly crowded car on a railway, or a curbstone on a leading street, is the better stand to take for observations. It would not be possible to go through the long list of the different kinds of people you meet with on a train; much less would it be easy to analyze each category and to give a pen picture of individuals. But I will, for the present moment, divide a certain number of railway travellers into two classes—and they are the two extremes. One consists of the sensitively polite, the other of the boorishly vulgar. You will meet with samples of both on almost every train. But to notice them the train must be crowded; otherwise the representatives of these two classes have not an opportunity of exhibiting their respective characteristics.

THE SENSITIVELY POLITE.—You are quietly seated in your place when the seats around you become gradually filled. Persons with untold boxes and satchels try to squeeze themselves and their belongings into spaces that are entirely too limited, and as a result they have to pile up things upon seats intended for travellers. A polite and bashful person comes in, goes up and down the aisle half a dozen times, looks to right and to left, and fails to find a vacant spot. There are many seats unoccupied, in one is a coat, in another a satchel, in a third an umbrella, and so forth. These articles indicate that some other persons have been in, and like the squatters of the North-West, have "staked out" or taken possession of their space of ground. One has gone out to say good-bye to a friend, another has gone to the smoking room, a third has gone to buy a paper; and, for one cause or another, they have all left their seats. The polite person does not wish to intrude, he is timid, he stands in the passage, and possibly remains standing long after the train is in motion, while several of the seats still continue vacant. If there is aught in the world to make a bashful person more bashful still it is a consciousness that he is becoming conspicuous and that his every move is being watched, and possibly criticized by others. The poor fellow puts in half an hour of torture, and then, unable to stand it any longer, he ventures to sit down in a vacant seat. Ten to one the moment he has done so, the original occupant turns up and informs him that he is in the wrong seat and obliges him to get up and make a second exhibition of himself for the benefit of an unsympathetic public. A very unpleasant predicament to be in I must admit. Yet I am under the impression, that when such numbers are on a car there should be no such rule as retaining a seat that the retainer does not intend to fully occupy throughout the journey. And if a man has taken possession, especially if it be a lady who comes second, he should not in-

sist on having his seat; he could easily go back to wherever he had been all that time and leave the lady in possession. It is generally the case that she is only going a short distance and eventually he will get his seat back. But there is no real rule, and politeness does not always carry the day.

THE ROUGH AND VULGAR.—As I said I have generally succeeded by being on hand early, in securing a seat, I have made it a rule never to take up more than one place, so that I would not be subjected to the humiliation or inconvenience of being obliged to make way for others. In one of my recent journeys I had gone about one hundred miles, without stirring from my little corner. I had an umbrella, a satchel, an overcoat, and three or four papers with me. As I completed the reading of the papers I looked around and saw that there were about four vacant seats in my neighborhood. Right across the passage sat a friend of mine and the seat beside him was vacant, I slipped over to shake hands with him. And I left my hat with my coat and other traps in my own place. No sooner had I commenced to exchange a greeting with my friend; than a fellow came in, (he had got on at a way-station), and looking around his eye fell upon my vacant seat. There were two vacant seats behind it and one in front of it; but he seemed to decide upon mine. He unceremoniously took my coat and flung it over the back of the front seat, shoved my umbrella into a corner, and sat down on my hat—making a pan-cake out of it. Seeing that he had squashed the hat, he coolly took the remains of my head-gear and threw after the coat, with an air of offended dignity, as if the hat had been in fault. It fell upon the seat in front and rolled upon the floor; he pulled out the umbrella, picked up the hat on the end of it, and set the two down on the seat where he had cast the overcoat. My friend and I watched the whole proceedings without a word. When this last performance was over I calmly remarked to him that "when you are tired abusing that hat, would be so good as to turn your attention to the satchel there and burst it open—and you might then tear up those newspapers, they are all mine, and I have no objection provided it amuses you." You would have been astonished had you seen the look of blank amazement and of marked confusion on his face. The fact is that I do not believe that the man fancied he was doing anything out of the way until his attention was thus drawn to his peculiar conduct. He did not even excuse himself, but simply sat back and stared at the lamp over his head, and remained so for the rest of the journey. I believe he was too confused to look around him. I think he imagine, like the bird of the desert, that as long as he did not see anyone, nobody saw him. At all events, he succeeded in making a perfect ass of himself, and perfect mess of my hat. This simply shows that the man was a boor; he had no sense of propriety, no care for the conveniences of others, and no judgment in selecting his place when in the presence of strangers. I did not attach any blame to him and I felt that he had been sufficiently punished—provided the lesson benefited him hereafter it will be worth half a dozen hats.

CONCLUSIONS.—My conclusions from all these common place observations are very brief, and they consist in the simple lesson, that in public as in private, in all circumstances, a due consideration for the feelings and for the conveniences of others should regulate our conduct. It is a rule that accords with the truest definition of a gentleman, and which also accords with that universally applicable principle of doing unto others as would have others do unto ourselves.

Asia's Great Earthquake

Until recently only the most meagre information has come from Russian central Asia with regard to the terrible earthquake which laid the city of Andijan in ruins in a single hour on the morning of Dec. 16 last. The

telegraph lines were destroyed and amid the excitement suffering and horror of the first weeks few details of the great earthquake were sent to Russia. It was made plain that the people were sorely in need of aid, and the response of western Europe was generous. Andijan was a city of 46,000 inhabitants. It was the most eastern

point reached by the Trans-Caspian Railroad in the heart of central Asia between the two great rivers Syr-Daria and Amu-Daria, which water Russian Turkestan. It was annexed to Russia with the large district of Ferghana by the celebrated Gen. Skobelev in 1881.

In recent years the town has risen to great importance because it became the centre of cotton culture and exports. The richness of the soil of Ferghana and its large agricultural population contributed to the rapid economic development of the town.

The Russian newspapers are now printing detailed accounts of the earthquake, which utterly destroyed 9,000 houses, 4,000 persons perishing in the ruins. All the wagons that could be procured were for days devoted to carrying the more seriously wounded to the neighboring town of Marghapan, where they might be sheltered from the cold and rain.

About 9 o'clock in the morning a tremor, slightly jarring the buildings, occurred. This lasted two or three seconds only, and as no damage was done the inhabitants were not greatly alarmed. A half hour later the same phenomenon was repeated, and was immediately followed by a terrific shock, which swayed the buildings to and fro and overthrew many walls.

The city was at once in wild dismay. Every one who could get out of doors rushed to the streets and open spaces and awaited in terror what might yet occur.

The sound of falling walls was everywhere heard for the next half hour, for the ruin of many buildings which had not been overthrown was completed by their own weight, that could not be supported on the now unstable foundations.

Half an hour later came another terrible shock that completed the ruin of the city. Almost all of the buildings that had sheltered 46,000 souls and the fine structures that had been erected by Russians in the business districts were now nothing but heaps of ruins.

The beautiful stone buildings occupied by the Russian Chinese Bank, the railroad station, the barracks of the Russian garrison and all the other conspicuous structures were reduced to heaps of ruins.

Many of the steel rails of the railroad track were twisted as though they were nothing but wire. The motion was vertical and terribly severe. Wagons, timbers and stone were projected into the air and many of the vehicles were thus broken to pieces on the streets.

For about fifteen minutes after the second shock many other shocks of almost equal severity occurred, destroying the few buildings that had still kept erect on their foundations. The whole catastrophe occupied about an hour, and while it continued a most unearthly subterranean rumbling noise accompanied the convulsions of the surface. A torrential rain beat down upon the scene of desolation and a furious rain-storm swept bits of the ruins and everything it could move before it.

A number of acts of heroism among the officers and soldiers of the Russian garrison were recorded. Capt. Touthkof and Lieut. Gherstoline refused to leave their ruined barracks until the last of their wounded soldiers had been removed. They were in the barracks when the second shock occurred, and the Captain was dangerously hurt.

A sentinel named Saschouk, who was guarding the flag and the strongbox of the military, was uninjured by the first shocks, but refused to leave his post until he was relieved by his superior officer, and was so badly hurt later that he had to be carried from the ruins. Subaltern Khaline remained at the risk of his life to save the wounded soldiers and prisoners. He found an opening in one of the walls, through which, by means of a ladder, the wounded men were passed one by one outside the ruins.

Another soldier succeeded in providing guns for the military patrol, that was needed to keep order after the calamity, by rushing into a building that threatened every moment to fall and throwing sixty rifles through a window into the street. The Czar of Russia has specially commended these and other heroes of the occasion.

It was the most terrible earthquake that is known to have ever afflicted this part of central Asia. The Russians had taken particular pride in beautifying the town with admirable buildings. It will probably be a long time before Andijan is restored to anything like its past proportions.

The poor man's dreams of wealth not half so pathetic as are the rich man's nightmares of poverty.

Leprosy and Cancer Laid to Poor Food

Jonathan Hutchinson, F.R.S., has returned to England after a tour of investigation in India as to the cause and prevention of leprosy, especially in reference to the hypothesis which assigns the foremost position among the causes of the disease to the use of unwholesome food. Twelve years ago the Prince of Wales' committee which was sent to India rejected this hypothesis, but Dr. Hutchinson's latest investigations have convinced him that the committee, if it had pursued its researches more deeply, would not have rejected it.

Dr. Hutchinson's general conclusion is that the facts do not controvert the hypothesis while some of them afford unassailable support of it, the truth of which his inquiries in South Africa last year convinced him. Dr. Hutchinson's tour of India included visits to Colombo, Madras, Lahore, Calcutta, and Bombay, where he held public meetings and discussions, and also visits to the leper asylums at Colombo, Madras, Calcutta, Purrulla, Asonal, Agra, Tartaran, Jullundur, and Bombay.

He visited in Ceylon all the lepers who had been fish eaters. In Madras and Calcutta each of the lepers, with the single exception of a high caste Brahmin, denied that he had ever eaten fish. In Bombay there was one doubtful exception. In Agra, Tartaran, and Jullundur there were several exceptions.

Of the 500 inmates of the Purrulla asylum all had habitually eaten of fish, and many believed that this had caused the disease. Some had left off eating it on that account. The majority of those who had not eaten fish were patients who had contracted the disease in early life.

In accounting for these, Dr. Hutchinson suggests "commensal communication" spreads the disease to a slight extent in a community where it has once been originated, without it becoming contagious in the ordinary sense of the word. Commensal or mouth communication conveyed the disease by eating food directly from the hands of a leper or otherwise receiving the bacillus by the mouth.

The prevalence of the disease in the whole population of India is not greater than five in 10,000, which is about the same percentage as in Norway, but not a single district is entirely free from the disease. It is always more prevalent in and near fishing places. In Ceylon, where the fisheries are so unproductive that the great portion of fish consumed must be imported, the incidence of leprosy is less than two per 10,000.

In Minicoy, the adjacent fish exporting island, where the inhabitants eat fish four times a day, the percentage is 150 in 10,000. In the Bombay asylum there are 400 inmates, the majority of whom are from the great fishing district of Konkarn. During eight years there have been no Jains and only one Parsee patient. The Jains are strict vegetarians. During the same period the island of Salsette, which has a population of 50,000, was the only Christian community which sent patients to the asylum. The Salsettes are all Roman Catholics, who observe all fast days, and the majority of them are actually engaged in the fish trade.

The report of the registrar general for Ireland on the prevalence and distribution of cancer shows that there has been a steady increase in the disease in that country. The number of deaths in Ireland in 1871 from that cause was 32 per 100,000 of the population; during 1891, 46 per 100,000, and during 1901, 65 for the same approximate figures. In England and Wales the death rate between 1871 and 1900 rose from 42 to 83 per 100,000, and in Scotland from 44 to 80.

The returns from Bavaria, Holland, Norway, Austria, and Prussia show a distinct increase in the death rate for the ten years ending in 1900. The returns from the United States tell the same story, but the percentage in that country goes up much more slowly.

In Ireland the County Kerry suffers the least, the deaths being less than 30 per 100,000. The west of Ireland generally, from Sligo to Limerick to the east, almost halfway across the island, comes next. The strip of country from Londonderry to Dublin averages from 70 to 90 per 100,000. The Carlow-Lough hall district exceeds 160 per 100,000, as does also the Crossmaglen district in the extreme southwest. No explanation can be found for the physical features on the geography, except, possibly, the damp climate and the cold, clayey soil. The registrar points out certain facts which have been substantiated by the infor-

mation he has collected. He says:—"Cancer is spread or generated by unwholesome food in dwellings which are generally in an unsanitary condition. Wounds and injuries are sometimes provocative of the disease, as is irritation of the lips by excessive smoking, but cancer generally seems to be a constitutional disease. Where one member of a family has been affected by cancer, others often suffer with tuberculosis, and sometimes even with epilepsy, lunacy, and idiocy. In many cases it is hereditary, and also to a certain infectious."

"It has been contracted through the lips by using the pipes of smokers. More than one case has been observed to occur in different families living in the same house, or among those who go from one occupation to another, so I seem to be justified in concluding that the disease is, to some extent, contagious and infectious."

Many English doctors are now convinced that the eating of pig's flesh in different forms is greatly responsible for the increase of the disease, pointing out that it is most common among the poor, whose chief meat is that of pigs, which is also the case in Ireland, while the disease is extremely rare among the Jews.

WATERWORKS SCHEME IN ENGLAND.

Frank W. Mahin, United States Consul at Nottingham, England, writes as follows of a waterworks scheme to supply Sheffield at a distance of ten miles, Derby, thirty miles; Nottingham, thirty-five miles; and Leicester, fifty miles: "The Derwent Water Board, representing the four cities, has acquired the water rights of fifty square miles in upper Derbyshire, and has already spent nearly \$500,000 in preliminary surveys, and the total cost of the plan is estimated at \$50,000,000. The water resources to be brought to the service of these towns are practically inexhaustible. The gathering ground has an elevation above sea level varying from 500 to 2,070 feet. The annual rainfall is copious. An estimate based on dry-year averages shows that a minimum of fifty inches per annum may be relied upon. This will yield for storage 50,000,000 gallons per day. The whole of this gigantic volume of water will, of course, not be available for consumption; one-third must be restored to the Derwent, at a point below the reservoir system, to prevent injury to the vested interests in and along the stream. The cost of the works will be borne proportionately to the amount of water used by the four towns.

"There will be five reservoirs, of respective dimensions as follows: (1) Storage capacity of 1,886,000,000 gallons, with a dam 114 feet high and 1,080 feet long; (2) capacity of 2,495,000,000 gallons, with a dam 113 feet high, and 1,080 feet long; (3) capacity, 2,495,000,000 gallons, with a dam 95 feet high and 1,950 feet long; (4) capacity of 1,472,000,000 gallons, with a dam 103 feet high and 840 feet long; (5) capacity of 2,160,000,000 gallons, with a dam 136 feet high and 980 feet long. All the water collected in these reservoirs must be filtered, and filtering beds covering an area of fourteen acres will be made. The five dams will need 2,000,000 tons of stone, and quarries covering fifty-two acres have been bought in the neighborhood. The machinery used can deal with masses weighing up to six tons, and many blocks put into the dams will be of that size.

"It has been necessary to construct a railroad seven miles long for both present and future use in connection with the reservoirs. The road has been built with almost as much care and expense as if intended for passenger traffic. Several lofty viaducts were necessary. On the work, as a whole, a small army of men will be employed for a dozen years or more. A town has been built especially to house them. The houses are of galvanized iron, lined with match board. Dwellings are provided for married men and their families, as well as for single men. Sanitation and sewage are carefully provided for. A school, a hospital, a concert hall, and a church have been established. Stores of all necessary kinds, a post-office, and a police force complete the equipment of the town. Its present population is 600, which will be much increased when work is fully under way."

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Regulating the Price of Labor.

From Indianapolis, Ind., comes the report of the minimum wage law, providing that unskilled labor shall not be employed for less than twenty cents an hour by counties, cities and towns, and providing a fine or imprisonment for any person or corporation doing public work to employ unskilled labor for less than that wage, has been held to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. In an opinion written by Judge Dowling it was held that the law interferes with the freedom of contract, and that the Legislature can no more fix the price of labor than it can the price of bricks.

Judges Jordan and Gillett concurred in the facts, but not in the reasoning. The appeal grew out of a suit of a laborer named Frank Street, who, in the Wayne Circuit Court, sued the Varney Electrical Company for twenty cents an hour.

In the opinion Judge Dowling says:

"No sufficient reason has been assigned why the wages of the unskilled laborer should be fixed by law and maintained at an unalterable rate, regardless of their actual value, and that all other laborers should be left to secure to themselves such compensation for their work as the conditions of supply and demand, competition, personal qualities, energy, skill and experience may enable them to do."

"While the counties, cities and towns are political and municipal subdivisions of the state," says the court, "they are not governmental agencies in such sense as to subject the management of their local affairs, involving the making of contracts for labor and materials to be used upon local improvements and the payment for the same out of the revenues of the county, city or town, to the arbitrary and unlimited control of the Legislature.

"They are corporations, as well as governmental subdivisions and agencies and as such corporations they have the power to make contracts by which the rate of compensation for property sold to them is fixed.

"With regard to such contracts for the purchase of property or the employment of labor, counties, cities and towns stand much upon the same footing as private corporations, and they can not be compelled by an act of the Legislature to pay for any species of property more than it is worth or more than its market value at the time and in the place where it was contracted for.

"The power to confiscate the property of the citizens and taxpayers of a county, city or town by forcing them to pay for any commodity, whether it be merchandise or labor, an arbitrary price in excess of the market value, is not one of the powers of the Legislature over municipal corporations, nor the legitimate use of such corporations as agencies of the state.

"For the same reason," the court continues, "an act fixing the price of unskilled labor at all public works at not less than twenty cents an hour is a legislative interference with the liberty of contract by counties, cities and towns, which finds no sanction or authority in the doctrine that counties, cities and towns are municipal subdivisions of the state."

The court finds the act deprives a citizen of property without due process of law in the case of labor on public improvements for which assessments are made. Citizens are entitled to have such work done at rates the municipal subdivisions are able to secure.

Lastly, the court finds it to be class legislation, for "unskilled labor" is a classification "unnatural and unconstitutional."

"The laboring men of the state," says the opinion, "may, for some purposes, constitute a class concerning which particular legislation may be proper, and this classification has been recognized and sustained in statutes requiring the payment of wages in lawful money of the United States; forbidding the assignment of future and unearned wages, and in similar acts."

The law was enacted at the request of labor interests. Since its enactment the demand for unskilled labor has increased, and it is said that there is very little labor that does not receive twenty cents an hour or more to-day.

THE QUEST

By

(From Benziger's)

Father Maurice sat in the window of the rectory, bright daylight outside, treacherous March, but spring sunshine, and lay now in great yellow-dark floor. A glow was, indeed, with snow frost in it—just barely set the blood tingling joy of being alive.

But Father Maurice's sunshine nor the glory given day. The blue sky not appeal to him, no air, whiffs of which to the window as if to test of nature out into the bar of the yellow light of his eyes, and rested closely-waving hair, bright purple tints in it.

He was a noble-looking man, and strong and finely forehead was that of a broad, thoughtful, white marble. His eyes looked manly with faith of a depths; the large mouth square chin settled the enance into one of determination of whom a mother proud as she sent him battle of God against a man to whom the old up as the incarnation of ness, and children clinging carnation of all strength.

His books—he was a mean attainments—lay heap at his elbow. His in orderly precision, before him. But he touched His abstracted gaze r opposite wall, and even the rectory parlor faded sight, and before him came of the past.

(...)

It is a tiny room—kitchen-room combined. On a clean floor is laid a carpet. Old-fashioned, framed upon the walls, a mantel is a cheap picture Sacred Heart. Muslin curtains by bright red ribbons the windows, and in the blossom the flowers to loves. She is a little w shrewd, gentle, kindly soft gray eyes—eyes that beams of charity on all world. She is a widow child, a boy, her idol. She velous dreams for that b and in his most restless moments, the thought of helps to curb the untame anxious to outrun bound mischief as any other lad and healthy activity. Sh ed for him since his father left him with only her to and take care of him. L the mother of Samuel, she him to the Lord, and in were bound up all the stions of her life—all her hopes. No grand wishes no longings for things, no craving for material on the knees of prayer besought the grace that child of hers might be cal to reap the spiritual harvest.

The prayer was heard. blood of a long line of fcestors in him, even if of igin; the free air of Ameri in at every pore, made clear and his brain sharp, his kind," said the good to the delighted mother. healthy stock—we need him hat agnosticism and the w self."

She did not understand meant—but she felt sure boy was destined for some dful by those very words and thrived in health of a soul and body. From high college; from college to Daily the sweet face wrinkled and more holy, F was God's.

"A poor old woman, so wrote him, in her cramped, ing hand, "a poor old ign man, dear—but who, thank won't be ashamed to face and what those words Father Maurice only he k as her offering, dare he de single unworthy thought? value of the gift she gave? too high a sense of the things not to long to perfe to lead the highest life att