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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

WITHOUT doubt the chief international event of the month is Lord Salisbury's statement regarding the progress of negotiations in the Venezuelan arbitration in particular, and the scheme of a permanent and obligatory arbitration system between Great Britain and the United States, in general.

The rapid advance of this latter movement since December of last year, and its favourable acceptance by the people of both countries, is one of the optimistic signs of the times, and the happiest augury for the future of the nations.

Since the sudden friction between these two great English-speaking nations, which occurred at the close of last year, has resulted in the inception or stimulation of so mighty a movement, we may not view it as a matter of regret.

The need of slow advance, of careful consideration, of extreme caution, will be acceded by every thoughtful citizen. The fine considerations involved are palpable to even the most ardent advocate of peace. But the prominence given to the scheme, and the general desire for its accomplishment, are so markedly significant, so prophetic, that, like the golden streak upon the morning horizon, they show us the fair probabilities of the breaking day.

In an extremely ironical review of England's foreign outlook, which appeared recently in the *New York Sun*, the following reference is made to Armenia:

Turkey, Armenia Crete? Now, there is a situation to which an Englishman can turn with equanimity and satisfaction. The only point which gives him any uneasiness is the fear that the supply of victims for murder and torture may give out. That would upset the *status quo*. The normal conditions of crime, rapacity, bloodshed would be disturbed. According to Lord Salisbury, and most Englishmen apparently agree with him, such a change in the existing conditions within the Turkish empire is fraught with the most awful dangers which could possibly threaten the nations of Europe. So terrible are they that the Prime Minister has only to hint at them with bated breath whenever news comes of a particularly dreadful massacre in order to stifle all promptings of humanity in English breasts. But there is no need to borrow trouble yet on this score. There still remain some thousands of Armenians and Cretans for slaughter, and until they are gone the situation in the near East will continue normal—and therefore right.

England deserves it. But the United States is—from the civilised and Christian standpoint at least—equally culpable. That the people themselves recognise this, was made clear by the Armenian demonstration in the recent Christian Endeavour Conference held in Washington.

THE final passage of the Deceased Wife Sister's bill in the British House of Lords is an occasion almost sufficiently momentous to demand public celebration. A whole generation has arisen since first the bill was introduced, and with it has come the broader outlook and more tolerant attitude of the last quarter cen-

ture. Now, it is almost with amusement that we recall the bated breath and lowered tone adopted in speaking of this very shocking measure, whose passage, it was felt, would rend the whole fabric of British morality.

Prejudice dies hard; and the bishops have prevailed for many years, until the curious anomaly is presented of an act that is legal, and therefore presumably moral, in the colonies, being illegal, and therefore presumably immoral, in the Motherland.

Were the history of this bill in its relation to and effect upon the honourable loves of men and women but recorded, it would be a romance beyond any fiction.

As is a people, so is its Government, therefore Lord Salisbury's statement, made when speaking of the arbitration scheme, that "the tendency of the Government of the United States is to desire a rapid and summary decision," applies equally to the citizens of that country.

This desire for rapid accomplishment and decision, in any matter, is a national trait, and to it is due the present Presidential problem which is agitating the country.

The account of that Chicago Convention is one unparalleled in modern political history. Yet it is only the outcome of this impulse toward wild rush of decision rather than deliberative judgment, which has been steadily gaining upon the people, both individually and as a nation; until now, in this year of '96, it has carried them so far from the self-control and impartial tribunal of their Puritan ancestry, that six hundred cool, calculating delegates, representative of tens of thousands of the people, have been swept, in a moment of excitement, into nominating a Presidential candidate whose platform means financial wreck to the country.

The sober ones among them are shocked, the outside world looks on amazed. Yet again we say this is no surprising thing. The philosopher who searches for the mainspring, will find it far back in the fervid sense of freedom that came upon the people in 1776, and which has grown through the century into an intoxication.

Who says that the day of oratory is done? Let him look to the records of the Chicago Convention; let him ponder the history of this new Presidential candidate, before whose magnetism of personality and electrifying eloquence, grave law-makers became as emotional as women, and astute politicians impulsive as little children.

The dynamic of politics is always some one individual around whose person the passion of his followers may centre. This man, handsome, brilliant, eloquent, dramatic, yet poor, honest, earnest, frank, himself passionate, emotional, magnetic to a degree, and a demagogue,—is it to be wondered that an impulsive popu-

lace should enroll itself under his banner, without much regard as to where it may lead them,—and follow him, if need be, to the death.

And all of these qualities, with many others equally attractive, are granted him, even by his enemies.

W. J. Bryan's personality and seductive platform are a conjunction strong enough to draw the great labour world of the United States—an underworld chiefly—into a blind, passionate adherence.

THE money issue of the Presidential campaign is too intricate and complex a problem to be within the full understanding of the average citizen,—and therein again lies a danger, since half knowledge is often worse than ignorance, as a half truth is worse than a lie. 'Demone-tisation of silver,' 'appreciation of gold,' '16 to 1,' 'monometallism and bimetalism,' 'money unit,' 'repudiation',—these are mystic terms to the uninitiated. And initiation is not always possible, since the explanation of these involves an understanding of commercial and financial technique possible only to the capitalist or the student of economic science.

Again, so many large issues are involved: the banking system, the national debt, silver and gold mining and produce, and that stupendous labour problem—these certainly, and mayhap a score of others.

After listening to a discussion on the all-absorbing silver question, we would not be surprised to find that it also comprehended north poles, isothermal lines, measles and X rays.

ONE of the amusing incidents in connection with the Presidential nomination and campaign, is the wild rush of the American press to secure the greatest news-novelties concerning either candidate or platform. It turns the cathode rays of its inquisitory upon the former, until every shred of shelter is pierced, and the man's private life stands revealed in minutest detail;—his birth, babyhood, home, school, relatives, what and when he eats, drinks, sleeps; when he enters an hotel, when he steps out again, and with whom he shakes hands.

The *Chicago Times-Herald* published full-page horoscopes of both Bryan and McKinley's nomination, in which Saturn exercised his malignant influence upon W. J. Bryan, and Jupiter, the beneficent, beamed upon McKinley. Another equally enterprising journal published in its Sunday issue some sixty 'gold' and 'silver' Bible text references, as 'handy reference for orators during the campaign.' Yet another brought out a phrenological diagram of the brain, with special reference to 'language centres,' so that Bryan's oratorical gifts might be duly considered.

It is all very amusing, were it not just a trifle within our contempt.