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NOTICE.

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The ease with which train robberies are still committed in some of the States and Territories of the Union is certainly not creditable to the authorities. The recent surprise of a south-bound train on the Santa Fe railroad by three men, who, after overpowering and robbing the conductor and porter, proceeded to "go through" the passengers—carrying off altogether about \$1,500—reads more like a sample of Turkish brigandage than an instance of real life in a law-governed country. This is the third example of such marauding in the course of a few months. It is time that Uncle Sam took effective measures for the protection of honest wayfarers. Whoever follows the thieves to the mountains and takes them captive will get \$1,000 from the outraged company, but he must be wary as well as valiant who will secure the prize.

Several of our French contemporaries have taken up the subject of our insane asylums with an earnestness which encourages the hope that the Government will soon deal faithfully and humanely with the question. This hope seems all the more reasonable as it is journals friendly to the powers that be which have been most outspoken in urging prompt and comprehensive reform. It is generally admitted that the farming-out system is antiquated and entirely incompatible with that treatment of the insane which medical science and humanity demand. *L'Union Libérale*, which has begun a series of elaborate studies on insanity—the work clearly of an enlightened alienist—points out that a system which consists in nothing more than detention, is out of keeping with the best usage of modern civilization. Public opinion was first drawn to the defects of our present establishments at the time of the British Association's visit to Montreal. Much indignation was directed against Dr. Hack Tuke who (whatever may have been thought of him in this province) is undoubtedly one of the foremost students of and writers on insanity in Europe, for having ventured to criticize institutions without respect to persons. That Dr. Tuke ever dreamed that his honestly expressed opinions would be regarded as deliberate and malicious insults to a most deserving order of self-sacrificing ladies we do not believe. His animadversions on lay institutions in his own land and in the United States were of a candour and severity less tempered with kindness than his comments at Montreal. Besides, the commission, subsequently appointed by the Government, took practically the same line of attack against what its members deemed deserving of reprehension. It is essential, indeed, to a fair and unprejudiced consideration of a subject in which we are all directly or indirectly concerned, that the personal element be eliminated from the discussion altogether. The matter is too serious to be made a pretext for bandying reproaches, or a theme for charges and recriminations against religious creed or political party. What is of moment is that al-

most all, without respect to church, party or nationality, are convinced of the necessity of a change in the system. The only point on which there is room for difference of opinion is whether the urgency of the circumstances is strong enough to justify the annulment of contracts entered into before either Governments or the public had awakened to the realization of the situation and to a full sense of the action which duty prompted them to take. The decision on that point rests with Mr. Mercier and his colleagues.

Our contemporary, *The Week*, calls attention to the anomaly of treating a Christianized Chinese lady in a Christian land as if she were merchandise. What a shock, it is urged, must such treatment have been to one who had accepted Christianity as embodying the broadest doctrine of human brotherhood! Nor would the contrast between religious theory and political economy, as practised by Christian people, be easy to explain away. It is not the first time that earnest advocates of foreign missions have had to protest against a proceeding which stultified their cause. It is to be hoped that the remonstrance of the Women's Missionary Society will prove more effective than preceding appeals in bringing about the desired change in the application of the law. The problem presented by Chinese immigration is one of admitted difficulty and it is a delicate duty, however discharged, that necessity has imposed on our Government. It is useless to argue that no such law should exist and that then there would be no trouble about its enforcement. After a careful investigation and fully weighing the pros and cons in the case, it was decided that some restrictive measure was essential for self-protection. What is wanted is a reform in the *modus operandi* which would save Chinese gentlemen from insult and Chinese ladies from treatment which is an outrage on civilization. There are surely a few persons connected with the Customs who are sufficiently enlightened and judicious to be allowed a certain discretion. Or are they all not so? And to the brutality which has already made our neighbours despicable in the eyes of cultured Chinese is there no alternative? In that case, should our missionaries to China escape the treatment awarded to the least favoured nation, we shall have reason to felicitate ourselves and them. Besides, is not China one of our markets that are to be? Let us be wary and void of offence. In Chinese ethical books there is a passage practically identical with our golden rule, on which the superior men of the race have been framing their conduct for two millenniums and a half. And did not another heathen say that the way through precepts is long, while through example it is short and effectual?

M. Gustave Molinari, editor of the Paris *Journal des Economistes*, whose name and reputation are familiar to many, his person, to several of our readers, undertakes to show, on the authority of a member of the higher circles of French commerce, that the McKinley tariff will do much more harm to the people of the United States than it will to the European nations trading with that country. In 1887-1888 the United States furnished \$519,298,000 of a total \$683,862,000 imported by seven European states—England, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain and Italy. During the same year those seven countries supplied to the United States merchandise valued at \$264,300,000 in a total of \$2,723,000,000 imported to the United States. In the former case the proportion of the total value of goods imported by the seven European countries contributed by the United States was seven-tenths, while, on the latter, the value of the merchandise sent across the ocean to American ports was less than one-tenth. The closing of Europe to the United States will mean, therefore, the forfeiture of seven dollars for every dollar that Europe will lose by the closing of the United States. The cry of retaliation has already been raised not only on the continent but in England—two writers in the *Fortnightly* proposing the formation of a fund by means of a duty on United States corn, dairy produce, beef and other food stuffs, out of which bounties should be paid on all

similar foodstuffs from colonies or other countries receiving British goods free—the bounty being higher to free-trading than to protectionist countries. By this plan it is considered that England could retaliate on the United States without raising the price of foodstuffs for English consumers. When even England accepts the challenge of the McKinley bill, our neighbours may be sure that the nemesis in store for them from professedly protectionist countries will not be long delayed.

The many-sidedness and sharp contrasts of modern civilization are singularly exemplified by the variety of subjects, the discussion of which has for years past been attracting those œcumenical congresses whose transactions add so much to certain special domains of knowledge. Last year was exceptionally rich in these world-gatherings, the French exposition drawing men and women engaged in every pursuit that could be named from the limits of the inhabited earth. But every year has its tale of fresh themes that compel from afar the devotees of the sciences, the arts, the industries, whose development brings us nearer to the millennium. A conference on weapons of war will have peculiar interest for one class of thinkers and workers. Another will meet to deliberate on schemes by which war may be abolished or robbed of its horrors. The congress by which this year will be most memorable to men of science is doubtless the tenth International Medical Congress, which took place in Berlin and was attended by some six thousand general practitioners and specialists. It is the latter who gave these congresses their *raison d'être*. There was a time when speculations such as those of Koch, of Pasteur, of Lister and others were looked upon with disfavor by members of the profession, who deemed themselves practical men. Some of the grandest discoveries of our time, as of every age in the world's progress, have been made under the ban of suspicion, ridicule or apathy. But every victory won over prejudice by the patience and fortitude of the inspired and persevering investigator is a triumph for humanity. The men of knowledge and skill who assembled from east and west, from north and south, under the presidency of Professor Virchon, to learn the latest results of research in the noblest of all the sciences could not but be stirred to fresh exertion in the warfare against disease and death. Canada was represented by some of her best physicians and surgeons and the Dominion is sure to profit by their contact with the great minds of the old world. The first of these congresses was that which met at Paris in 1867. Here, as on so many other occasions, France took the initiative in a great movement. About five hundred medical men of various nationalities attended the opening congress and since then this parliament of the world's healers has been triennial. There are still (as was made deplorably evident a couple of years ago in connection with the fatal illness of the late German Emperor) unseemly jealousies to get rid of, but, on the whole, the effect of these conferences has been most salutary in bringing into friendly intercourse the benefactors of the human race of different nationalities. The cordiality with which the great personalities present were greeted as they appeared, without regard to origin, was not the least welcome feature of this latest congress.

Last year we presented our readers with portraits of the ladies who won the prizes at the beauty competition at Spa. A male jury of eight was appointed to award the 10,000 francs entrusted to M. Hervé du Lorrain for distribution among the three fairest of the group of twenty-one selected from the whole list of candidates. The arrival of the ladies, whose charms were to be the subject of arbitration, was made the occasion of much public rejoicing in the town honoured with their presence. The burgomaster presided at the examination and the proceedings were marked by dignity and decorum. Grace of carriage, taste of toilet, and courtesy of manner were taken into account as well as beauty of person. The religious authorities, however, did not approve of an exhibition which was considered out of harmony with female modesty, and might, it was feared, stimulate the vanity of