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A Strange Choice. It is of immense importance to the world that in colleges and universities exalted Christian ideals shall obtain. The opportunities which these seats of learning afford for serious, thoughtful and philosophical study and for a comparison of intrinsic values in the light of history and of present-day experience should lead, under competent guidance, to the preservation and wise development of youthful enthusiasms and to a sober judgment respecting the character and results of that prevailing secular spirit which would subordinate everything to the attainment of wealth and immediate success. It is frequently stated that Christianity is strongly represented in the American Colleges of the present day, that the disbelievers among teachers and students are relatively far fewer and the believers far more numerous in this generation than in the past. And it is sometimes intimated that the hope for the world, in respect to its religious welfare, is quite as intimately connected with the college as with the church. However, this may be, there are occasional facts that would seem to indicate that the University is not wholly outside the sphere of the dominant secular influence. There is, for example, the action of the Senior Class in Yale University in selecting by vote Napoleon Bonaparte as its ideal historic character. Upon this the *Wall Street Journal* comments as follows: "Bonaparte! Think of it—actually chosen by a class of young bachelors of arts, just issuing from one of the greatest American universities, as their favorite among the long line of men who have written their names on the imperishable scroll of fame. It is well for those philanthropists who are pouring their wealth into the endowment funds of schools of learning, to consider a moment what this means. Is that a good investment of money whose dividend is the selection of Napoleon Bonaparte as the world's greatest hero? For of what use is a school of learning if it does not mould character as well as train the mind. What must be that instruction that at the end of a long college course leaves the graduates holding in their hands the life of Napoleon, and declaring that to be their ideal? Is it worth while to devote so much money and talents to the education of the young if that is the net result? One would naturally think that young men fresh from association with masterpieces of the world's literature, and from study of ancient and modern history, would have selected as their favorite one of those heroes whose lives contributed splendidly to the sum of human happiness and progress. But after all, it is upon reconsideration not strange perhaps that the Yale students selected Napoleon. Does not Napoleon in many ways personify the ideas that are dominant in modern business? Commerce has become conquest, conquest not always by war, but conquests by methods none the less ruthless and immoral. It is not inappropriate that we often speak of a great captain of industry as a Napoleon of business."

A new Turbine Steamer. The latest development of turbine ideas as applied to marine architecture was initiated a few days ago in the British Channel. The new turbine steamer, the *Queen*, made her final trip before being placed in commission, and her builders and the inventor of the turbine engine, as well as the owners of the steamer, are said to have expressed their satisfaction with the results. The vessel made the journey from Dover to Calais, twenty-five knots in one hour and ten minutes, the tide being favorable. The return trip against the tide, and without any attempt to break records, occupied one hour and thirty minutes. The vibration was remarkably slight, the deck, it is said, felt as substantial as a board walk on land. Those on board predicted a turbine Atlantic liner within two or three years, and Hon. A. C. Parsons, the inventor of the turbine marine engine, expressed the opinion that a full knot per hour could be added to the best trans-Atlantic record by a turbine liner.

"Epoch-making Discoveries." According to a London despatch to the *New York Times*, the recently announced discoveries bearing upon the nature of matter are being rapidly developed. Investigations by M. Curie, the French physicist; Lord Kelvin, Professor Rutherford of McGill University, Montreal, Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge have carried them into an entirely unknown region in physics and chemistry, where all analogies fail and all accepted views of the nature of matter offer no assistance. A study of the radio-

activity of the three new elements, radium, thorium and uranium, shows that three kinds of rays are emitted. One kind consists of radially projected atoms of matter which are thrown into space at the stupendous speed of 30,000 miles per second. These particles emitted by radium are one thousand times more massive than negative electrons, which are also thrown off at a similar speed, and which have long been known under the name of radiant matter. They are positively instead of negatively charged, and, moving faster than the fastest flying star, are the most rapid-moving matter known. This property of radio-activity has placed a new weapon in the hands of the chemical analyst as superior in delicacy to the existing methods as those of spectroscopy were when introduced forty years ago. Matter in quantities invisible under the microscope, unweighable and beyond the detection even of the spectroscope. Every experiment yet made bears out the theory of the disintegration of the original elements into new elements. As an explanation of this newly-discovered quality of radio-activity it is found that the process continues without reference to any interference by ordinary physical or chemical force. The transmutation of elements is still beyond the power of the chemist, yet it is conclusively proved to be proceeding spontaneously throughout the universe. If science should one day learn how to control or influence this progress the power which would accrue to man would be something beyond the capacity of the imagination to conceive.

Too Many Railway Accidents. Regular readers of the daily paper must have been struck with the very large number of railroad accidents reported during the past months. Many of these accidents have been due to collisions, others to the collapse of bridges or to other disasters, while apart from these, the killing or maiming of brakemen in connection with the performance of their duties appears to have been unusually frequent. No doubt that in railroading a certain measure of peril is unavoidable and some of the frequent accidents which brakemen meet with are doubtless due to that carelessness which familiarity with danger is apt to beget. But when all reasonable allowance on these scores are made, it would seem that the loss of life and limb is far larger than it should be, and that much is to be charged to the account of Railway Companies failing to make sufficient provision for the safety of their passengers and their employees. *The Scientific American* in a recent editorial on this subject holds that, in reference to United States railroads, there is incontrovertible evidence that the charge of negligence on the part of railway corporations is well-founded. "According to Accident Bulletin No. 6, published by the Interstate Commerce Commission," says *The Scientific American*, "the number of passengers killed by train accidents during the months of October, November and December, 1902, was 266, and of injured 2,788. Accidents of other kinds, including those sustained by employees while at work and passengers getting on and off cars, etc., bring the total number of casualties up to 12,811. Of these 938 were killed and 11,873 were injured; from which we see that at the close of last year our railways were killing people at the rate of 3,752 per year and disabling them at the rate of 47,492; a rate of 51,244 deaths and injuries in a single twelve months." The journal quoted from compares these figures with the casualties connected with the Boer War. The war lasted about three years, and the total number of casualties on the British side—including killed, wounded, died of disease and invalidated home—was 27,732, of whom 5,727 were killed in action. The casualties on the Boer side are supposed not to have been so large, but allowing them to have been equal, the total casualties of the three years' war would not greatly exceed the number of railway casualties in the United States for a single year, supposing that the rate shown in the last three months of last year were to prevail throughout the year. What a year's summing of railroad accidents in Canada would show we do not know, but it is doubtful if the percentage of casualties on the basis of the number of passengers and employees is smaller in this country than in the United States.

Provision for the Deaf and Dumb. The Premier of New Brunswick and the Superintendent of Education for the Province have lately visited Halifax, where they visited the Nova Scotia school for the

deaf and dumb, inspecting the school, management, methods of teaching, etc. The impression made upon Mr. Tweedie and Dr. Inch is said to have been very favorable, and accordingly arrangements have been made with the management of the Halifax institution to send the deaf mutes from New Brunswick to be educated there on the same terms and conditions on which the Nova Scotia children are received, the amount being \$165 per year, half to be paid by the Provincial Government and the remaining half by the municipalities. It is of course optional with the parents or guardians of deaf and dumb children whether they send them to the school or not, but it is certainly to be hoped that in view of the first class opportunities which the school at Halifax offers and the excellent reputation it bears, as many will be sent as practicable. The arrangement made with the Halifax school is not for any definite period, but Dr. Inch is quoted as saying that it is the intention to send the deaf and dumb of New Brunswick to Halifax until it is found desirable to establish a school in this Province for their instruction under the control of the Board of Education.

As a Government Work. The sentiment in favor of a railway from Quebec to Winnipeg, to be constructed as a Government work, appears to be growing. The talk is that if the Government shall build such a road it will lease it to the Grand Trunk for a term of years and will guarantee the bonds of the Grand Trunk for the remainder of the line—that is from Winnipeg to the Pacific Coast. The great argument in favor of Government ownership is that a line would thus be permanently assured to the country with equal running rights to all companies that seek the privilege. There would be no danger of the line passing into foreign control or being absorbed by any other company. In place of giving subsidies and receiving no adequate equivalent in return, the country would have an asset in the shape of another great highway between the east and west. Another argument in favor of the proposed Government road is that by means of the Intercolonial system the Government would have in its own control the question as to the Atlantic terminus of the proposed new transcontinental road.

Since the above was written dispatches from Ottawa intimate that the Government has decided to construct a railway from Moncton to Winnipeg via Quebec as a government work, and that the Government is about to enter into an agreement with the Grand Trunk Company by which that Company will receive a lease of the road thus to be constructed for fifty years, with the understanding that other railway Companies may be granted running rights over the road. For the first five years the company will pay no rental to the Government. For the second five years they will pay the net surplus of receipts over working expenses. For the remaining forty years they agree to pay 3 per cent. on the cost of construction. The Grand Trunk it is understood will build a road from Winnipeg to the Pacific and from that part of the transcontinental line the Government, it is said, will guarantee the bonds. In the case of the prairie section the guarantee will be 75 per cent. of the actual cost of construction, but is not to exceed \$13,000 a mile. The Government have arbitrarily fixed 500 miles as the length of the mountain section, and for this distance the guarantee will also be 75 per cent. of the actual cost up to a maximum of \$30,000 a mile. The rates to be charged are to be subject to the control of the Governor in Council or the Railway Commission, but on the Government section of the line the rates are not to be cut down to a figure that will prevent the company from paying the annual rental. It is said that the Grand Trunk authorities are anxious that construction shall begin at once and be pushed forward with all practicable haste. On the Moncton-Winnipeg section construction will be under control of a commission appointed by Government. Three or three and a half years is the time spoken of as probably necessary to complete the work.

We regret that the crowded condition of our columns makes it necessary to hold over to another issue some contributed articles received during the week.