

**HARD ON THE SMALL FIRMS.**—The great beef and pork-packers of Chicago are building up more than one monopoly. They already control the meat trade of the country, and they expect within a few years to control the hide and leather industries. The tanneries which they are erecting are capable of handling 90 per cent of the hides used in or exported from the United States. Experienced tanners are now employed by them in buying up all the hemlock and pine lands in Wisconsin and in Michigan, and the comparatively small firms now engaged in the business are already beginning to feel shaky. The chief thing in favor of the monopolists is, that they are known to be generous, public-spirited men, who will return a part of their profits to the public.

**A WORD TO MISSION OPPONENTS.**—It is a trite and common saying among men of a certain class that they "do not believe in missions," and by iterating this cheap precept and wantonly pointing out the shortcomings of mission work they do much to obstruct the work of many devoted men and women; and yet it is well known that there is not a district ten miles square on this earth where decent men and women may live in comfort and safety unless the spread of Christian doctrine has cleared the way and laid the foundation for that decency and security. If the scoffers at missionaries and mission work would but realize what the spread of Christianity has done for them in a material way, they would not, unless they were creatures of the lowest type, attempt by word or look to deprive the men and women of heathen countries of similar advantages.

**COLLISIONS IN THE NAVIES.**—Since the collision between the *Victoria* and the *Camperdown* public attention has been turned in a marked degree to naval affairs. The channel squadron has in particular been closely criticised, and the fact that the ships of this squadron unanimously signalled a refusal to perform a similar evolution to that called for by Admiral Tryon has convinced many of the Admiral's error. The British ratepayers are, however, beginning to resent the costly naval experiments which are being tried at their expense, and Rear-Admiral Seymour was severely censured by the public when it was generally known that there had been fourteen collisions in this squadron in less than a week. Experiments of this kind are doubtless valuable, but they speedily roll up a heavy burden for the ratepayers.

**A PLUCKY WOMAN.**—Walter Besant, the well-known novelist, has been warring for years against the loose copyright laws of Great Britain and of the United States. He has been particularly vigorous in his crusade against piratical publishers who steal books from authorized firms, and against dishonest publishers who make the authors' portion of the profit on book sales almost infinitesimal. A young lady has recently come to New York, who, acting under instructions, is to stand between the authors and the lower class of publishers. "The Cleveland Publishing Company," of which she is the head, is prepared to do an honest international business, and will pay at market price for the many English books which they will publish. In order to do a successful business she will have to compete with pirated editions; but as she has influential friends on both sides of the water, and is well backed by British capital, she may keep up the fight until the much-needed copyright laws are compiled and enforced.

**BILLS PAYABLE.**—We have sometimes wished that farmers and newspaper men could exchange places with each other at the momentous seasons of the year when all accounts are supposed to be settled. Supposing that a farmer raised and sold a thousand bushels of wheat to as many customers and waited until it was "convenient" for his purchasers to settle the little, but to him, most important bills. In reality the farmer sells his entire crop to but few individuals from whom he justly demands, and usually receives, prompt payment. The publisher is in the place of the imaginary farmer. His output has been bought by many individuals, and he must deal with each individual, in order to obtain the value of his goods. His time and energy are thus doubly called upon to obtain what he has already earned. If our country friends would but regard the paper output in the light of the wheat output and "do as they would be done by," in the matter of prompt payments, our newspapers would be better in tone and more efficient in their special lines. We can assure our readers that ready money is quite as valuable in the city as in the country.

**NO MONOPOLY IN SEALS.**—The scientific as well as the commercial world has an interest in the safe return of the four whaling ships from the Antarctic Ocean. The ships have been away for several months and have travelled the region visited by Ross in his third antarctic voyage (1842—1843). It is probable that since then no navigators have visited this portion of the Polar Seas, and the account of the present voyage reads like an old-time romance. In December last, in latitude 56 degrees, 18 minutes, the ship fell in with icebergs and sailed through waters that absolutely swarmed with animal life. The finner whales abounded, seals were plentiful, and flocks of white petrels and sheathbills arose as the ships moved on. Although one object of the expedition had been to capture whales, it was not thought that the blubber would be worth the trouble, and the whole force of the expedition was directed towards obtaining seals. Four varieties of seals were found, and so stupid were they that they made no attempt to escape. The search for whales was not wholly successful, but the sealing industry will doubtless be benefitted by the research, and the scientists will glean over the careful accounts which have been kept of the phenomena of the Polar regions.

**AN INDUCED RAIN-FALL.**—A very refreshing wind is blowing through the United States at present. It is being propelled or promulgated by the International Cold Wave Association, and its object is to secure rain falls in arid districts of the country. The Association claims that by means of their process they can produce storm clouds out of a clear sky, and that in districts where hot dry winds are blowing they can cause the rain to fall. The theory of the new process is that cold wind and rain travel together, and that if the cold air can but be induced to come down from its lofty perch the rain will speedily follow. In order to secure this result a mixture of gases are driven up in the air, where they are exploded by electricity. The heavier cold air alone rushes into the vacuum thus made, and the rain follows in due course. The theory is an interesting one, and some successful experiments have already been made, but the rain-makers of the past few years have not advanced the profession, and the new company will have to combat much prejudice.

**IT WILL NOT REACH NOVA SCOTIA!**—Some money-making Americans have gone into a new business, which is neither more nor less than the collecting and shipping of bones of the dead, but not entirely gone, generations of those who preceded them in this world. The shipments are now coming from Mexico, and they are to be used for fertilizing and for sugar-refining purposes. It is estimated that the skeletons of some 50,000 individuals have already been sent over. In the natural order of things, if the business is a profitable one, it will be extended, and the bones that are cumbering the ground in crowded cemeteries will share the same fate. There is a streak of vandalism and inborn disrespect for many of the customs and prejudices of society in the breast of the average American, and in the present instance his money-making propensities have carried him beyond the pale of decency. Any right-thinking person cannot but be shocked at the new business, and if it can be stopped in no other way the Government should interfere.

**BICYCLING ACCIDENTS.**—There is certainly an alarming increase in the number of bicycling accidents, and men who do not care for that vigorous form of exercise jump to the conclusion that bicycling is a dangerous pastime that can scarcely be indulged in by one who has a due regard for the safety of life and limb. The real cause of the increase in accidents is due in no small degree to the wide-spreading use of the wheel. There are thousands more wheels in use than ever before, and of necessity the accident rate has increased in proportion. There are, however, two other causes which are not generally recognized. One is in the construction of the modern wheel. The pneumatic tire allows the wheel to turn noiselessly, thereby frequently causing collisions. Again, the wheels which have the pneumatic tire are without brakes, and the driver is unable to stop readily, and is often forced into what he cannot but know to be certain danger. The old style wheel, though clumsy in construction, had yet certain decided advantages over the improved wheel.

**NO FAVORITISM SHOWN.**—There is something a little funny about the family of the Duke de Veragua, whose visit to the World's Fair has caused so many disturbances. It appears that he mistook the palaver of the United States press for genuine sentiment that might at any time take a tangible form. When some society people proposed that a national collection should be taken up in order that this descendant of Columbus might repair his shattered fortunes, he was charmed with the idea, and will probably be much annoyed with his younger brother, who has evinced by far a too lively desire to put his finger in the pie as well. The brother contends that he too is a descendant of the great navigator, and as such is entitled to a portion of the uncollected fund. This appeal has had a blighting effect upon the might-have-been-contributors. There are other brothers, there may be sisters, and there are uncles and cousins and aunts, "to say nothing of a large connection by marriage." They are not equal to the burden, and they respectfully decline to assume the honor and privilege of supporting the broken down aristocracy of Spain.

**THE GERMAN SOCIALISTS.**—The term "Socialist" is in rather bad odor at present. It is still associated in the minds of many with the Anarchists, the red flag and the dynamite bomb, but in reality the genuine Socialists are a most reputable body of men, and in Germany they are already making themselves felt in political affairs. The platform which they lay down is not an unreasonable one. It includes universal suffrage for men and women and a recognition of the people's acceptance or rejection of all laws. The right of holding public meetings and freedom of speech is to be maintained, and free public schools are to provide compulsory education. All indirect taxes are to be abolished, and taxation on income, on capital and on inheritances, will make up the State income. Many laws are to be enforced for the benefit of the working class—eight hours will constitute the legal working-day, and a free judiciary will protect the rights of the people, and medical aid and medicine are also to be freely given. In order to meet these expenses it will be necessary to abolish the standing army and establish a militia. In this connection it is also arranged that peace and war are to be decided only by an International Board of Arbitration. No public funds are to be used for church or religious purposes, and the law will recognize no distinction of creeds. A platform such as this is so in accord with general opinion on this continent that it seems scarcely more than a summary of the rights and privileges which even the poor among us enjoy. Yet it is typical of the less progressive European countries that the advocated reforms seem nothing less than the war cries that precede rebellion.

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