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OVER LAND AND SEA.

Ground was broken on March 9th at Washington, D.C., for the erection of the first building in the group which will comprise the American University, to be conducted under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first edifice will be the Hall of History, the endowment and building fund for which justifies already the putting into execution of the long projected plan of erecting the University, Matthew G. Emery presided, and a hymn written for the occasion by President Rankin, of Howard University, was sung to the tune of "America." Chaplain Millburn, of the Senate, Rev. Dr. Mackay-Smith, Rev. D. Hamlin and Rev. Dr. Wilson assisted in the religious exercises. Brief addresses were made by Bishop Hurst, the chancellor; Postmaster-General W. L. Wilson, Senator Knute Nelson, Senator John M. Thurston, Representative L. E. Quigg and B. L. Whitman, President of Columbian University. After the addresses the ceremony of throwing up shovelfuls of earth was participated in by the chairman and others. This is the institution to which the late Mr. Massey of Toronto has left \$50,000 in his will for the erection of a building which will represent Canadian Methodism.

Even wine drinking France is beginning to realize that unlimited indulgence in intoxicating beverages is fraught with grave dangers to the health and morals of the people. Steps have been taken by the French Government during the past year to guard against the adulteration of wines and liquors, and to place some restrictions around their sale and use. More recently the important work of providing instruction in the public schools on the effects of alcoholic stimulants has been taken up. Last August, M. Poincaré, French Minister of Education, ordered "anti-alcoholic instruction" to be given in the Normal schools in which teachers are trained, and M. Combes, his successor, now directs that this example shall be followed in elementary and secondary schools. He states that the increase of drunkenness is causing anxiety. Teachers of philosophy and political economy must therefore demonstrate its pernicious consequences on families and states, while teachers of natural history and physiology must give proofs of the disease and of the premature death caused by it, and teachers of hygiene and chemistry must find as many opportunities as possible of uttering warnings against the abuse of alcohol.

Edison has discovered that a coat of tungstate of calcium makes plates so sensitive to the X rays that a shadowgraph of the hand can be taken fifteen feet away. This substance was found after trying one hundred other experiments, and is six times more sensitive than platinum barium cyanide, which has been used heretofore. A peculiar instrument like a field glass is used in taking the picture. With scientific and inventive genius at work on the problem, we shall soon have some marvels of success.

Woven asbestos is the new sanitary material for the inner soles of boots and shoes. Asbestos is light and is a non-conductor, and thus possesses the essential properties of a comfortable boot. With an inner sole made from this mineral fabric, damp and undue warmth may be alike defied. A company has been formed to utilise asbestos in the manufacture of boots. It is curious that this valuable material was much used for clothing in the 18th century.

The great philanthropist, George Peabody, was once asked whether he enjoyed making his money or giving it away, and he replied, "I enjoyed making money. I think it is a great pleasure to make money; and when the idea was first suggested to me that I should give money away, it did not please me at all—in fact, it distressed me. But I thought the matter over, and concluded that I would make an experiment on a small scale. So I built the first of the model tenement houses in London. It was a hard pull, but after it was done I went among the poor people living in the rooms, so clean and comfortable, and I had quite a new feeling. I enjoyed it very much. I gave more, and the feeling increased; and now I can truly say that, much as I enjoyed the making of money, I enjoyed far more the giving it away."

"A moving mountain" is a decidedly unusual phenomenon, especially when it is genuine and not, like the Birnam Wood of Macbeth's fancy, a mere creation of the mind. In the mining districts of the Gard, Southern France, some thirty miles to the north of Nîmes, the Gouffre mountain is situated. It is now advancing at the rate of some five yards a day towards the Gard, a river which flows by its base. An important colliery which supplies coal to the naval station at Toulon has already been destroyed, and a portion of the main line of the Paris and Barcelona Railway is threatened by the subsiding mass. The Gouffre, says a writer in the *Manchester Guardian*, is one of those mountains that rest on a layer of soft rocks, underneath which, again, is a hard rock bed impervious to water. The heavy rainfall of the Cevennes, which gives rise to many mountain torrents of unusually great volume, has gradually affected the intermediate layer—in this case of grit and green marl—so that it has become an unstable watery mass upon which the Gouffre is slipping forward into the valley. A well-known instance of the phenomenon was the immense landslip at Goldau in 1806, where the Rossberg, just north of the Rigi, moved forward, overwhelmed the village, and filled up part of the Lake of Lowerz. A similar disaster occurred a few years ago at Elm, another Swiss village, and the top of the Diablerets has more than once slid off in the same terrifying fashion.