

GREATEST OF EDITORS.

IS CHARLES A. DANA, WHO GUIDES THE NEW YORK SUN.

A Man of Gigantic Intellect and Executive Ability—How and When He Works—A Glimpse of the Daily Life of a Great Journalist—Some of His Characteristics.

Then Mr. Dana of the New York Sun there is probably no greater living journalist. For nearly fifty years he has been a member of the fourth estate, and for over twenty-five years he has guided the course of one of America's greatest dailies. To-day he is the most prominent figure in the journalistic world on either side of the Atlantic. The position he has gained is due for the most part to his splendid executive ability, but he is also a man of immense intellect—in fact, he is a born journalist and could not help but succeed.

No trait is more characteristic of Mr. Dana than his intolerance of anything like humbug about his professional labors



CHARLES A. DANA.

or methods, says Edward P. Mitchell, in McClure's Magazine. For almost fifty years he has managed to keep himself ahead of the clock, and to meet, without much personal consciousness of effort, all sorts of new and suddenly developed situations requiring swift decision as between courses of action momentarily different.

Mr. Dana's own imagination has never decorated with mystic importance this power to dispose rapidly and accurately of any newspaper question that comes up at any hour of the day or night. It has never seemed remarkable to him that he should be able to get out his paper morning after morning without any sense on his part of high pressure or extraordinary intellectual strain. He works hard, and, at the same time, it is quite true that he works easily, for he works with absolute tranquillity, undisturbed by that most common and most wearing attendant of mental effort, the mind's constant recognition of its own attitude towards the labor in which it is at the time engaged.

The rather naked little room in The Sun building in which Mr. Dana has sat almost daily for twenty-five years is a surprise to many persons who see it for the first time. In the middle of the small room a desk table of black walnut; a shabby little round table at the window, where Mr. Dana sits when the day is dark; one leather-covered chair, which does duty at either post, and two wooden chairs, both rickety, for visitors on errands of business or ceremony; on the desk a revolving case with a few dozen books of reference; an ink-pot and pen, not much used, except in correcting manuscript or proofs. Mr. Dana talks off to a stenographer his editorial articles, and his correspondence; a big pair of shears and two or three extra pairs of spectacles—these few articles constitute practically the whole objective equipment of the editor of The Sun.

Mr. Dana's theories of journalism? Well, he scarcely ever stopped to consider them himself. He has always been much more concerned about the practical question of making for to-morrow morning a paper which its purchasers will be sure to read. Mr. Dana has lectured more than once on journalism, and his audiences and the readers of his published remarks have been delighted with his presentation of the subject; but his experience is too ripe and his wisdom far too alert to attempt a code of specific directions for the making of a great newspaper. What Mr. Dana himself writes in the Sun or elsewhere has that indefinable piquant quality of style which holds your interest and makes you read on without conscious effort, instead of laboring on, with admiration—the flavor that is in Charles Reade, but not in George Meredith or George Eliot; in field strawberries, but not in California peaches.

In judging or using the prose or poetry of others the great editor is hospitable to almost any respectable style or method, no matter how different from his own, as long as the writer has something to say. His tastes are very catholic. He can tolerate either a style approaching barrenness in its simplicity or rhetoric that is florid and ornate in extreme, providing it conveys ideas that are not rubbish. He is continually reaching out for fresh vigor, unconventional modes, originality of thought and phrase. If all Mr. Dana's staff of writers should happen to be cast in one mould, or should gradually assimilate themselves to a single type, so that there was monotony of expression in his paper, he would become uneasy. The first thing that would probably occur to him to do would be to send out for a blacksmith, or perhaps the second mate of a tramp steamship, to write for the Sun in the interests of variety and variety. If he had good ideas, all right; Mr. Dana himself would attend to the syntax.

Imagination is a quality for which he has the highest respect, but it must go with sincerity. Dullness he cannot stand. He is as impatient of wishy-washy writing as of cant. He pities a fool, and can be kind to him, but he hates a sham; and this of his nature, is the key to much that has puzzled some observers of Mr. Dana's professional career. In all his relations with his subordinates and assistants in every department he is a model chief. He is true to his helpers, reasonable in his requirements, constant in a good opinion once formed. His eyes are on every part of the paper every day, and they are not less sharp for points of defect than for points of excellence, but his tongue is ten times quicker to praise than to blame. Generous and prompt recognition of good service of any sort, or of honest, although only partially successful, effort, is habitual with him. His condemnation can also be particularly emphatic, if there is occasion for emphasis, but faults provoke him to humorous commentations, rather than anger.

BOATS OVERLAND.

Capt. Eads' Scheme Revived in a Ship Railway Project.

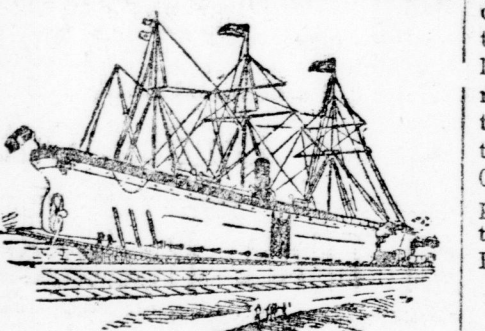
Everything about canals and ship railways is interesting to Canada just now, and so the project, which has just been revived, to build a ship railway through The Dalles, Oregon, the great gorge of the Columbia river, is timely. The United States has granted \$150,000 to defray the engineer's preliminary expenses.

The suggestion of a railway for the transportation of seagoing vessels over land did not come from the officers of the U. S. War Department; it was made first by James B. Eads, the famous engineer, who came forward about twelve years ago with a plan for a ship railway across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico. Captain Eads' scheme was then regarded as visionary, and although he laid it before the Congress of that country, that body failed to take action. Now, however, that the creator of the idea has been dead five years, its Congress has recognized the value of his suggestion.

The physical features of the country at The Dalles will compel the modification of Captain Eads' Tehuantepec plans to some extent, but on the whole they will be generally carried out. The point that Eads made, which was laughed at twelve years ago, is that ships are strong enough to stand a trip on a well-ballasted and level railroad without undue strains. In proof of this Captain Eads prepared plans for the Tehuantepec ship railway, which contemplated two ordinary ship railways, such as are used for hauling out vessels for purposes of repair. One of these was at either end of the line and the connection between was a straight and nearly level railroad with as many tracks as the size and weight of the vessels to be carried required. He contemplated at the eastern terminus of his road a basin into which a great car could be run upon submerged tracks. The vessel to be transported was then to be floated over the bar, her keel placed exactly over a specially prepared rest for it, "bilge blocks" to support her on the sides, pushed under her, and firm lashings made. Then two enormous double-ended locomotives, twice as large as any now in use, would pull the car gradually up the inclined bottom of the basin, which was to have an ascent of but one foot in a hundred. Once out on dry land it would be a comparatively simple operation to haul the car and its load over the railroad to the basin at the other end of the line, and there reverse the operation just described.

The great stumbling block in the way of the whole plan has generally been thought by engineers to be the difficulty of obtaining an arrangement of braces and supports on the car, which, while sustaining the vessel rigidly on all sides, would still themselves respond to the necessary twisting of the car as it passed over the roadbed. Captain Eads was met with this objection, and he insisted that it was not well founded, as a ship is built sufficiently strong to withstand greater strains than she could possibly receive in being slowly and carefully carried over a smooth railroad bed. The U. S. War Department engineers have to some extent held to their original opinion, at least to the length of devising a new kind of car to support the vessel. It will be fitted with an elaborate and complicated set of springs, which will be so arranged that they will fit the form of the vessel at every point below the water line, much as the water itself does. This device, the engineers think, will take the place of the inward pressure of the railings the outward pressure of the cargo against the sides of the ship. As the Columbia River at The Dalles will only float vessels of 14 feet draught, and that at high water, the experiment of building a ship railway there will not be as conclusive a test as at some point where ocean-going ships of from 20 to 36 feet draught and corresponding tonnage could be carried. Still, a ship of 4000 tons can be readily built on a 14-foot draught, and many are already plying on the Columbia River of two and three thousand.

The Dalles, or, as they are known, the Great Dalles, of the Columbia river, are really a great series of rapids, caused by the contraction of the river to a width of



A VESSEL IN TRANSPORTATION.

200 feet between walls of rock seventy feet high. The nature of the land and its rocky character make a canal and locks impossible except at fabulous expense, and also seem to offer a great obstacle to a ship railway. It seems at first impossible to overcome the difficulty presented by the wall of rock 70 feet high, which prevented a railroad being built to the water's edge. The army engineers have, however, determined to obviate this trouble by building at either end of the ship railway an enormous lift, or elevator, which, by hydraulic power, will raise and lower the car with the loaded vessel. The railroad proper will be about fourteen miles long and will follow a course through the rugged country of The Dalles which will be nearly straight, it being deemed advisable to avoid curves of over two degrees.

Captain Eads' plans regarding tracks are likely to be closely adhered to, save that not more than five will be needed whereas the Tehuantepec road was to have had six. The same is true of the engines, which will haul the ships and cars. Designs for them have not yet been made, but it is apparent that to do the best work they will have to be specially constructed.

Russian Finances.

It is rather difficult to form a correct opinion on the financial condition of an autocratically governed empire like that of Russia, where little reliance can be placed in the official publications. It must be acknowledged that the government hitherto has rigidly observed its obligations to its foreign creditors, yet English capitalists have sold nearly all their property invested in Russian securities, and this for the simple reason that the finances of a country which goes on borrowing annually, even in times of profound peace, deserve no confidence. The Germans have followed, and France, having bought most of these bonds, is now the foremost creditor of Russia, the sum total of her securities in French hands being estimated at no less than \$3 milliards of francs.

The Fly Witted.

"Don't you think it is rather cowardly," said the bald-headed professor to the fly, "for a six-footer like you to jump on me in this manner?"—Washington Star.

A SOAP BUBBLE PARTY.

Happiness Glows, Although Many Pipes Were Broken in Pursuit.

"Mamma! oh, Mamma! See what Philip Jay brought, see it is a piece of cardboard with a real pipe tied to it—what pretty blue ribbon. Read it, Mamma, quick!"

As soon as mamma could explain to the breathless little girl that it was an invitation to play soap-bubbles with her little friend Lenore Jay, that afternoon, she danced off to show her treasure and tell her next door neighbor about it. She found he had an invitation, too. Both children could scarcely wait for the time to pass until it was at the hour for meeting at Lenore's.

Mrs. Jay had provided plenty of pipes, and a bowl of soapsuds on the hardwood



floor of the dining room, and there they merrily and safely amused themselves and Lenore, the baby, all the long, bright afternoon. A little before 5 o'clock, Mamma, Jay and Philip came in with cookies and lemonade. Later, as the little guests wandered homeward looking for flowers and ripe berries in the hedges and gathering the sweet wild roses, they agreed that it was the nicest party they were over at, for as they said, "soapsuds doesn't hurt calico and gingham. It didn't matter if the pipes did break, and it was so much fun seeing who could make the biggest bubble." How much happiness there can be at a soap-bubble party is vividly depicted in the accompanying illustration.—American Agriculturist.

Two Interesting Babies.

This seems to be the year of interesting babies. There is that one, as you know, the little Prince Edward, born to the Duke and Duchess of York, making the fourth in the direct line of succession to the throne, the first and only baby in English history who was ever born while three of his predecessors were still living.

And now there's another baby almost as interesting, the little daughter of Lieut. and Mrs. Peary, born way up in Greenland, further north than any white child ever dreamed of being born before.

The relief party which went out to find Lieut. Peary found him safe and sound, and the baby quite a year old. The little one comes back with his mother, while Lieut. Peary stays another year to complete his work.

Lieut. Peary, by the way, has not been much more fortunate than the rest of the Arctic explorers this year. Mr. Wellman, you remember, lost all his boats and equipments before he came home. Dr. Cook lost his ship, the Miranda, and all the trophies his party had taken. Other explorers have lost their lives, for the Arctic regions this winter have been harder to explore than ever. The floating ice has been tremendous, filling even the seas that are sometimes open. Lieut. Peary says that the storms and the cold have been the worst known for years. It is doubtful whether any white man ever encountered any to equal them.

Even the dogs were frozen under the snow during the storm when the Lieutenant and his men were making an exploration. Some of the dogs were frozen to death, and others were frozen so fast to the ice that the men had to chop them loose. The wind blew at the rate of 48 miles an hour, and the thermometer fell to 60 degrees below zero. This was when the party had encamped on an ice cap 5,000 feet above the sea. Still there are people who love an Arctic expedition better than anything else in the world.—Lillie Hamilton French in New York World.

They Comforted Each Other.

Johnny and Daisy go to school together, and are very fond of each other. One day in school the teacher asked Johnny to define "signet."

"Signet is a young seal," answered Johnny.

"Signet means a small seal," quickly said the boy below Johnny, and Johnny had to go down the class.

Everybody laughed except Daisy, who gave Johnny a look of sympathy.

Soon afterward the teacher asked Daisy what is meant by "stem" when you use it in the sentence "to stem the current."

"It means," said Daisy, "when mamma takes the stems off the currents to make plum pudding."

Then the whole school, except Johnny, laughed at Daisy.

After school Johnny put his arm around Daisy's waist and said:

"If it doesn't mean that, Daisy, it ought to."

And Daisy replied:

"I am sure, Johnny, a small seal must be a young one."

And so they were both comforted.

Darwinism.

There was an ape in the days that were earlier. Centuries passed and his hair grew curlier; his thumbs developed; in centuries more so candid appendage was seen as before.

His appetite grew; he was known as a skeptic; then he was a man and a dyspeptic!

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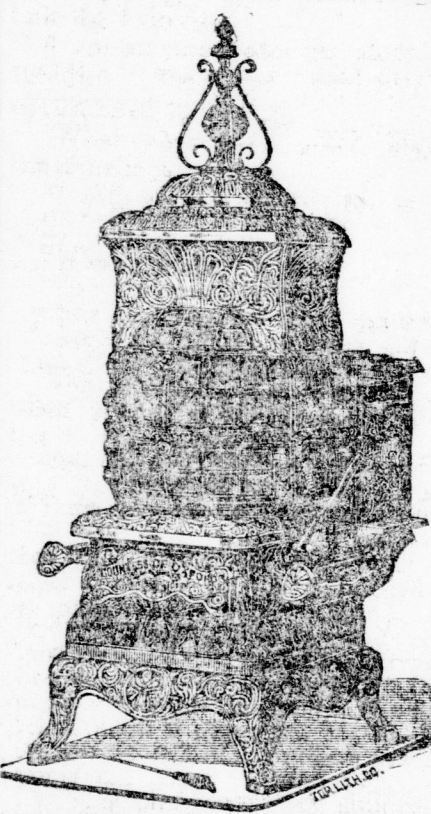
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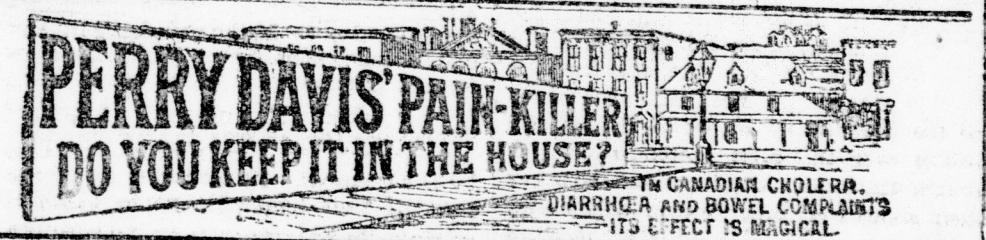
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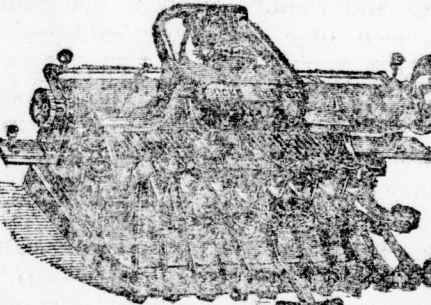
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