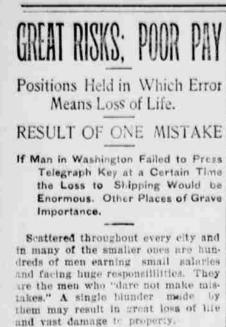
THE COLUMBIAN, BLOOMSBURG, PA.



In almost every reat business enterprise there is some one man who, while not being considered among the important men in the works, would disarrange the whole muchinery of the establishment if he were to make even the smallest mistake in the perform-

ance of his duties. Suppose, for instance, that one of the minor officials in the weather bureau at Washington should fail to press a telegraph key at certain stated intervals each day.

This duty may seem unimportant, yet were he to fail in it the entire shipping business of the Atlantic coast would be disarranged and vast sums of money would be involved. This official is the one who takes the time observations for the bureau every day. At a certain time he watches a little star creeping slowly across the field of an instrument called the transit, and when it reaches a thin line made by a cobweb stretched across the lens he presses a key.

Each time he touches the key he regulates and adjusts the clocks by which the time for the entire Atlantic coast is set. Captains of the outgoing steamers set their watches by this and if they made a mistake even of a few seconds their calculations would be badly out of the way by the time they reached the other side.

Some time ago, in England, a terrific explosion occurred at the powder. mills at Ross. The loss of life was appalling and the loss of money great. Yet this accident would not have happened but for the carcle-sucss of a man who received something like \$6 or \$8 a week. He was stationed at the entrance of the mills. His work was to make a thorough search of every person who entered, and to prevent any one carrying in matches or pieces of metal.

The workmen were provided with cessing-rooms, where they were biliged to change their clothing and ut on soft felt shoes instead of the nes they wore out of doors.

The watchman had been in the service of the company for a long time, and was reliable. But one day he failed to notice that a new workman. unused to the routine of the plant, had failed to remove his shoes and put on the felt slippers. A spark from the nall in the shoes of this man caused the explosion.

The responsibility upon the shoulders of railroad men is well known and thoroughly appreciated. The switchman in the tower carries the

A FIRE THAT WON'T GO OUT. Phenomenon Exhibited at Railway Station in Scotland.

It is not generally known that in Scotland, not more than three miles out of Glasgow, there is a fire raging nt a railway station which has been going on for months, and notwithstanding that tons of water have been poured upon this insidious fire, it cannot be put out.

Several months ago a whate piece of ground close to the station was wanted by the railway company as a siding. The level of this ground was too low, so truckloads of refuse were "dumped" on it to bring it to the necessary level. A large proportion of this refuse consisted of rotting vegetation, and in the course of a little time it heated to such an extent that combustion set in and started not only a smoldering fire but flames actually burst through the ground,

Attempts were made to quell this fire, and it was thought, after several weeks of hard work and tons of water that it had been put out. What was the surprise however, to see it break out airesh in another place and nearer the station. Fears then began to be felt for the safety of the station buildings especially as the main double line to important coast and country towns led through It.

Fresh energy was then brought to bear, and much more water was poured on this fire, which seemed to have its stronghold in the bowels of the earth, but from the volume of steam and smoke issuing from innumerable erevices it was seen that the fire demon was resisting all efforts, and was slowly creeping nearer and nearer to the foundations of the railway station. It was now whispered and soon became known that the station had originally been built upon a sort of shale, which came out of the mines in the near neighborhood years ago. These shale mounds have been known to take years burning right through, and the stench from them is anything but pleasant.

The fire gained ground every day, until by and by it reached beneath one of the platforms, and any day thereafter might be seen the novelty of a crowd of people waiting on a platform from the chinks and crevices of which were arising in many places jets of steam from the fire below. Such a volume of water was kept continually playing upon it that actual flames. were prevented from showing above ground but any casual observer could see the evidences of the great heat below.

In time it was observed that the foundations of the station were settling and cracking and twisting in many places, and all sorts of efforts. had to be resorted to to keep the buildings from being permanently injured. At this present moment, as these lines are being penned, the fire has reached under the main line of the track, and it is one of the curiosities of the neighborhood to see the jets of steam and smoke issuing from between the sleepers.

It is now a foregone conclusion that the fire cannot be extinguished, and it is being left to have its own sweet way and burn itself out. When this will happen nobody knows, as there is a large part of the foundation of the station not yet reached and as this has been going on for many months, it is quite probable that this fire in the bowels of the earth will go on sapping under the station until the buildings tumble about the passengers' ears .- Tit-Bits.

DUELLING BY THE INDIANS

In Some Tribes This Meant Death to Both.

AN AWFUL TEST OF NERVE

An Eyewitness Describes the Famous Duel Between Indian Chief Car- tlon. penter and a White Named Price. A perately Wounded.

"What is the Indian method of duelling?" asked the deputy sheriff.

"That depends upon the tribe. There are some tribes where a challenge to a duel means inevitably that both men must die. When an Indian feels aggrieved he demands a combat. The day for the same is fixed far in advance and is made the occasion of a little celebration. The entire tribe assembles. The braves sit in a circle, behind them their squaws and the young bucks.

"The offended man is armed with a rifle or a shotgun. The challenged principal is unarmed. At a word, both men arise and face each other, the unarmed man baring his breast to the bullet of his adversary. With eyes riveted on the little round hele at the end of the barrel pointed at him, the doomed man must face the protracted ordeal of expecting death at any instant without the least sign of weakening. The executioner may hold his gun as long as he pleases in order to try to break down his enemy. He may raise it and lower it or hold it steadily on the man under the frightful strain. But not even with an eyelid must the unfortunate betray his anxiety. At last the gun cracks and the bullet speeds its way and the victim lies dying. The slayer hands the weapon to a relative or a friend of the deceased, and is put through the same ordeal.

Some of the tribes have learned to fight according to the code of the white man, however, among these the Choctaws or Cherokees, which reminds me of the famous duel in July of 1883, when the celebrated Choctaw chief, Carpenter, fought near the Pine Creek Indian agency with a -white man named Price. Chief Carpenter was a splendid type of Indian, tall and straight and comely, and he had been well educated and had natural talents and natural instincts that put him head and shoulders over his Indian associates.

"As usual, this trouble was started by a disagreement over some trivial matter which caused a dispute and ended in that the white man called his red brother a liar. Throughout the trouble the big Indian had remained perfectly calm although considerably angered, and as the insult fell he gazed coldly into the eyes of Price and said: "'Your blood shall wash out that word.

"'Whenever you're ready say the word,' cried Price. 'You can do your washing right here and now, if you please.'

" 'Not now, sir, but to-morrow morning when the sun peeps over the top of that wild plum tree you must be here, and without fail.'

d wide and at an hour con-

FALLACY OF NICARAUGUA ROUTE. Three Objections to Panama Canal Are Dealt With.

It may be interesting to refer to the three objections which have been raised by the advocates of the Nicaragua route. These are the greater distance from our Atlantic and Gulf ports to San Francisco the obstacle to the passage of sailing ships caused by uncertain winds in the Gulf of Panama and lastly the health ques-

As to the first, the objection is ap-Wonderful Shot, After Being Des- parent rather than real since the time lost on the longer sea route will be full compensated by the gain in time required to traverse the canal, to say nothing of the saving in cost due to lower insurance rates, which will probably be only about one fourth as

much as by Nicaragua. Sailing ships would require towage throughout the entire extent of the Nicaragua route, and the same distance at Panama would carry them nearly or quite to a point where winds might be expected. It is true that the winds in the Gulf of Panama are certain, but sailing ships have used the route for hundreds of years, finding it to be the best for trans-shipment of their cargoes across the 1sthmus

In the matter of health the route by Panama enjoys an unenviable notoriety, but it must not be forgotten that the record has been largely aggravated by the disturbance of the surface soil in the construction of the railroad and the canal. As the excavations have now passed through this layer, and have reached the much less dangerous soll below, a marked improvement may be expected, especially when the requirements of modern sanitary science are rigidly observed. In fact the actual experience of the New Panama Canal Company more than justifies this expectation. After our good work accomplished in Havana we may count on an equal success on the Isthmus, The apparent superiority of the conditions in Nicaragua is probably due in no small degree to the absence of population between the lake and the Atlantic const.

In fine, now that the problem has been thoroughly studied, and that the facts are known, and that fortune has enabled us to secure the better route we have good reason to rejoice that hasty action was delayed, and that no mistake has been made in the selection .- Gen. H. L. Abbot, in the Englneering Magazine.

Kitten Baptized with Pomp.

Off the shores of the Dosphores M. Pierre Loti, novelist and Academician, has had baptized, with mock pomp and ceremony, his ship's kitten. The affair took place on Dec. S on board the French guardship Vautour, which the novellat commands as Capt. Viaud. In honor of the event, the Vautour was bright with bunting. Flowers covered guns and gunrooms. The captain's quarters were gayly ornamented, and a crowd of guests was on board, among them being the commanders of the English and Inssian guardships, the French consul general, the Russian naval attache, M. Coquelln, the actor, and ladies. The cat's sponsors were Mme. Roux wife of the commander of the Mouette, and the Vicomte de Salignac-Fenelon. Aft of the ship was "The report of the duel spread far erected an altar to the great Scandinavian deity Odin. The ceremony was opened by a burlesque sympathy of Romberg, executed anyhow by Pierre Loti and his officers, an embassy attache acting as conductor. The newly born kitten was in a dainty basket well wrapped up in warm wadding. The grand priest of Odin, all .obed in white, handed Mme. Roux a mysterious horn, at the sound whereof the head of the kitten emerged from the basket. Then the trio from Rever's opera "Sigurd" was heard, and, after an invocation addressed to Odin the grand priest baptized the kitten "Belkis," which, being interpreted, means "pretty girl." A short poem was next recited, and then M. Loti entertained his guests at lunch on board the Vautour.-London Daily Telegraph.



Country and Russia.

THE WEAKNESS OF RUSSIA

The Surprising Progress Made by Japan is due to the Intense Loyalty of Her Subjects to Their Ruler, the Mikado, Would Give All Their Money if Needed.

While Russia's essential weakness, in the utter discredit with which her promises are regarded by the nations, in the internal troubles which are as sailing her and in her financial dependence upon those who distrust her, is becoming patent to all, dispelling the dread with which her mere size has heretofore dominated the imagination of the world, the growth in strength and resource of what we still perversely call "little" Japan, is by no means the least of the surprises which that empire has of late years been springing upon the people of the west, says the Boston Transcript. She is to-day rich in everything which Russia lacks, Her honor unstained, no promise she has made has ever been broken. No internal troubles can yex a government like that of the emperor whose throne rests upon the well-nigh idolatrous affection of his people; and as for wealth, no other nation can compare with it in the readiness with which that neople would lay every dollar of their savings at his feet should war he declared against their glant antagonist.

Nor is Japan's wealth by any means colely of this sentimental sort. She is rich not merely in the honor and patriotism of her people. Relatively she may be said to be one of the richest countries in the world, surpassing every other except perhaps France in the rigid economics of life and in the proportion of the savings to the earnings of her people. It is only in the aggregate of her wealth that she is distanced by the nations of the west.

It is, however, when we come to consider the marvelous development of her resources since her emergence into the world that her growing, if not her present, agility to cope with her giant antagonist becomes at once manifest. An estimate of this growth is now made possible bp the recent publication of the "Fianancial and Economical Annual of Japan," issued by the department of finance and printed in English. To the eye it is but a columnar array of figures, yet to the student of modern history it is an array eloquent with its surpassing record of progress. Beginning with the year 1868, the date of the restoration of the emperor to power, there is no field of industrial or commercial enterprise which does not bear witness to the rejuvenated energy and ambition of the nations.

Leaving out of account the islets having less than one vi (two and onehalf miles) of coast line the empire of Japan comprises 487 islands, with an area of 162,000 square miles. Upon this area, about equal to that of our Atlantic coast states from Maine as far south as North Carolina, despite on both ice and in water. It was a the fact that only one-twelfth of the small boat, made fast to a sled, which land is arable, there is subsisted a was pushed on the ice and rowed on population of 45,000,000, increasing to the water. This crude mode of travel day at the average rate of nearly 1,-000,000 per annum. It was not so long boat, made the trip one of tremendous ago that the United States thought itself the greatest of nations when its population reached that figure, and the nation would have been greatly wroth should any one have applied to it then the diminutive with which Japan is so often designated. Nor, with our wastefulness and extravagance, would it be in any way possible to support here so vast a number on so limited an area. As to the aggregate of the nation's wealth, while no such claim as the above can be made, yet if the comparative tables of the revenue and expenditures of the government for the thirty-five years of Japan's new era may be taken as an index of the growth of the nation's wealth, the exhibit is a surprising one. In 1868 the total revenues of the empire amounted to only \$3,089,313 yen (\$15, 544,656), while those of the current fis cal year have reached the sum of 251, 681,961 yen; the annual expeditures during the same period increasing from 30,505,086 ven to 244,752,346 ven Even more signally illustrative of the growth of the nation's wealth is the relative expenditure in certain depart ments. The civil list, for example, while calling for only 250,000 yen (\$125,000) in 1868, now involves an expenditure of 3,000,000 yen. Japan's "coming out" has cost a penny also, the appropriation for the department of foreign affairs mounting from 111,-071 yen in 1868 to 2,125,000 for the current year. In the meantime, the cost of the maintenance of the army and navy has grown from 1,000,000 to upward 60,000,000, the latter sum being the appropriation of the current year for these departments. As proof however, that the nation has not given her exclusive devotion to these expensive modern playthings, the departments of public instruction and of communications bear ample witness the cost of the former having leaped from 57,709 yen in 1868 to 4,994,283 yen in 1903, while the latter, opened in 1871, and then administered at an expense of 121,798 yen, now requires an appropriation of more than 21,000,000.

AN ITALIAN TRAGEDY.

Dramatic Crime Almost Perpetrated Near Milan.

Extraordinary interest has been aroused by the discovery the other day of one of the most remarkable crimes that have ever occupied public attention. A certain Angelo Vecchio was well known here as a sportsman and dog breeder, and he was lately rewarded by the Government for having organized two very successful canine exhibitions. He founded and directed a newspaper devoted to sport. and had also some success as a painter. A few days ago, indeed, he published a book about dogs, with splendid colored illustrations drawn by himself.

A short time ago Vecchio hired a small house in the country, and to this place he entired a friend of his. Signor Berretta, a man of wealth and owner of the important Trevolo kennels Vecchio had told his friend that he had some pictures to show him, but this was merely a ruse. As soon as Rerretta was inside the house, Vecchio bound him with leather straps, and pointing a revolver at his head, threatened him with instant death unless he signed a document which was presented to him. On reading it Berretta found that it was a will, duly drawn up in proper legal form and phraseology, by which he bequeathed to Vecchio £40,000, or a third of his fortune.

Yielding to the threats of his captor, Berretta signed the testament. but he had not even then learned the full details of the plot of which he was the victim. Vecchio next compelled him to write a letter to his mother, in which he was to declare that he had committed suicide. Having obtained these documents, Vecwhich went out, leaving the execution of the remainder of his nefarious plans to a servant, who had been instructed to drown Berretta in a bath which had been specially installed in the villa for the purpose, and then, when night had fallen, to throw him into the neighboring river, so that it might be thought that he had committed sufcide.

For reasons which are not as vet quite clear the servant did not carry out his orders. He may have been unable to do so, or possibly he was smitten with remorse; at any rate, he untied Berretta and accompanied him home. Signor Berretta at once communicated with the police, who arretsed Vecchio's servant and his brother Vecchio himself has escaped, but he is believed to have gone to Genoa. -Correspondence London Telgraph.

Ingenious Life-Saver.

The life-savers attached to Uncle Sam's stations on Fire Island encountered great difficulties and dangers in crossing the Great South Bay to the Long Island shore, either by watercraft or ice-craft. Still, naturally enough, they had a longing to visit family and friends when the great island sea was choked with drift ice or partly frozen over. These ingenious people long ago realized the needs of a vehicle capable of traveling on either ice or water safely, and about thirty years ago they launched the first "scooter," a boat constructed to travel with the wind against or across the exertion. In the course of time a sail was tried, at first square-rigged and very small, but it was used only when the wind was fair. Then a special boat was built witch was partially decked. and the sled was made lighter until at last the scooter of the present day came about, with nothing left of the sled but the bottom of the runners. shod with iron, or better still, as experience has shown, with brass. And so has developed the wonderful "scooter" of the Long Island lakes and bays, a swift ice-boat that will sail in the water and from one element to the other quickly without a jar .--Country Life in America.

lives of hundreds in his hunds. The watchman at the otherwise unguarded railroad crossing is security for the lives of scores. Especially the latter is not a well-paid workman. Usually he is a veteran in the service, a man who has given his best years to some other branch of railroad work, who has been injured and now is being pro. vided for by a position as watchman. Upon him depends the safety of street car passengers and pedestrians.

Suppose there was a fire at Van Buren and State streets. The policeman who discovers it sends in the slarm immediately. This alarm, which rings a certain number of bells to show the number of the box, is received and noted in the electrical bureau. It then is the duty of one of the employes to resend that alarm to the firehouses. Should he make a slight mistake and instead of ringing the box which calls for State and Van Buren streets, should turn in an alarm at Madison and Halsted, there would be "some doings" and a spectacular fin-

At four places in England and at many in other European countries there are men who perform important duties on a pay of \$4 or \$5 a week.

These are the men who guard the great dams.

Every day of their lives they are supposed to make a thorough inspection of the walls and to repair and report even the slightest sign of a leak. One would think that such a monot

onous duty, performed year after year, would make these men grow carcless or forgetful of the importance of their missions, but that does not seem to have been the case.

Four years ago the watchman at the great Scroby dam, in Lancashire, saw a tiny leak that would have escaped the notice of most men.

He reported it immediately, and the experts who were sent to make an examination reported that if he had not been so prompt another twentyfour hours would have brought 20,000,-000 tons of water sweeping the valley.

This would have meant a loss of hundreds of lives and millions of dollars worth of property.

In the same way flaws have been discovered in the great Merton dam at Sheffield, and each one would have brought a terrible calamity.

One of these accidents was prevented by the discovery that a small stone had bulged about an eighth of an inch.-Chicago Tribune.

Freight Car as a Lock-Up for Tramps

"A novel jail delivery occurred near my home recently," remarked a suburbanite. "I live in an incorporated town within ten miles of this city. We have a Mayor and a town council and all that sort of thing and consider ourselves a very progressive community. With the coming of cold weather the authorities voted to conduct a crusade against tramps, and the town sergeant was instructed to take into custody all members of the gentry in question who invaded the town. For want of a better fail the law officer imprisoned the tramps he arrested in a freight car that had stood on a railroad siding for many months, until their cases could be disposed of by the Mayor. He secured the door of the car with a padlock. When darkness arrived one afternoon only a few days ago three tramps were imprisoned in the car. When the town sergeant went after them the following morning he was greatly surprised to find that prisoners, jail, and all had disappeared. During the night or the early morning an engine had backed in and moved away with the car. That is the last we heard of the prisoners, but I'm curious to

know when and where they secured their release."---Washington Star.

Brainwork Doesn't Kill.

In the lecture on longevity delivered last week before the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Hermann Weber, himself an octogenarian, gave official support to the doctrine which we recently set forth in this column-that brainwork does not kill, but rather the reverse. A few of his instances are Sophocles, Plato, Galen, Cicero, Moltke, Bismarck, Mommsen, and Gladstone, to whom we might add Hobbes, Carlyle, with Spencer and Kelvin among living men. The facts are that brainwork increases the supply of blood to the nerve cells, and promotes their nutrition and health. Mosso, an Italian, laid a man on a delicately balanced table, and showed that the head end sank whenever the subject did a mental sum or any other brainwork. The increased weight of his head was due to the life-giving blood. The truth is that brainwork, as such, never killed anybody .-- London Chronicle.

before sunrise a large crowd had gathered on the duelling ground to witness the encounter. Price was the first on the field and for a time it looked as if there would be no Carpenter. But true to his Indian blood the chief disdained coming too soon at the appointed place as much as he would have feared coming too late, and it was just as the first rays of the sun stole over the soft green of the tree that the red man stood in place. Not a word was spoken by either man Both drew their nistols and, raising the weapons, they fired almost simultaneously. Carpenter reeled, but with a mighty effort checked a tendency to spin round and, staggering, fred as the crack of his opponent's pistol sounded for the second time. This time Price jumped high in the air and landed on his face, stone dead

"With a wild shout the crowd pressed forward to surround the lucky chief, but before aid could reach him he fell senseless. Price had been shot through the heart, clean as a whistle, a remarkable shot considering the condition of the Indian when he made it; and a shot Carpenter could have made in the first place, without a doubt, had he been as determined to kill as Price proved himself when his bullet buried itself in the Indian's breast.'

Diplomacy Speaks English.

The question raised at The Hague international court as to the language in which the Veneuela arbitration is to be conducted marks the steady progress of English speech. A couple of centuries ago there would have been no such question. Latin as the international tongue would have been used as a matter of course; it was the acknowledged medium of statesmen, scholars and travelers. Then, in the eightenth century, by reason of the pre-eminence of Louis XIV., French succeeded Latin and reighed as the language of courts, diplomacy and travel. Its international status was first challenged at the Berlin congress in 1876, when Disraeli, prompted by his insufficient French, proposed and, with Bismarck's support, made English the medium of the deliberations.

At the Czar's peace congress English was widely used, and now in the Venezuela arbitration Great Britain, Germany and Italy maintain that the documentary pleadings shall be in English.-London Chronicle.

Achievements of the Negro.

Forty years ago the negroes of the South did not own a square foot of ground, nor a roof to cover them. Now there are 130,000 farms owned by negroes, valued at \$350,000,000; 150,000 homes outside the farm ownership, valued at \$265,000,000, and personal property valued at \$165,000,000. So, starting from nothing, here is an accumulation of nearly \$\$00,000,000. When the work began not 1 per cent. of the negro adults of the South could read or write. To-day 40 per cent. can do so. Fifty per cent. of the children are attending school, and with more facilities more would attend. There are 800 colored physicians in practice, 300 lawyers and 30,000 school teachers. There are 300,000 books in the homes of colored people and they own and publish 450 newspapers and magazines. -- Christian Work.

When a Man Sneezes.

It appears that many savage and semicivilized races of the orient have some curious customs regarding the sneeze. When the sultan of Monomtopa sneezes, for instance, the fact is made known from the palace by a certain signal. Instantly every subject within hearing of this signal sets up a shout, the cry is taken up by others, and so extends until it runs through the confines of his empire.

When the sultan of Senaar sneezes, on the contrary, every woman in his harem or within hearing turns her back on him and makes a sign of contempt by smiting her lips with her English. The last commercial treaty hands-disgusted that so mighty a perbetween China and Mexico was also in sonage should have to aneeze like an ordinary mortal.-Medical Record.

A Profitable Play.

Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac must come near to being the most successful play ever written. In Paris alone it has had 675 representations, and its total receipts in that city for that number of performances was 4,180,000 francs, or an average of 5,926 francs (about \$1,145) a performance.--Ex.

Russia Dominates Asia.

There can be no doubt but that Russia has been holding the "whip-hand" over China, and, in general, the whole of Central Asia as far south at the Indian border-rulers in substance if not in name-quietly pushing forward to consummation her gigantic schemes for political and commercial dominance in Asia. Already her traders, her sples, her military officials and diplometists have threaded the wilds of Turkestan, and even Tibet, and, hitherto, other inaccessible regions of Central Asia-sowing sedition in one spot concillating the native tribes in another, blinding the Chinese Government and the world at large as to her real intent-each and every step a part of a carefully thought out and pre-arranged plan formulated years ago in Russian chancelleries, to undermine British influence, which is the only barrier liable to obstruct . Russian policy .-- Gunton's Magazine.

The Kaiser's Artistic Taste.

The refusal of the German National Gallery to purchase Prof. Kampf's The Sisters," which was the picture of the season, still excites German connoisseurs. The cause of the refusal is the Kaiser and his often expresed belief that art should express only that which is cheerful and pleasant. According to the commonly accepted story, during the exhibition the calser was being plloted around by Prof. Kampf himself. When he reached the picture his majesty wanted to know who had painted those two miserable little girls. Kampf admitted he had done it. The kaiser made no comment, but notice of the refusal of the gallery to buy the picture followed a few days lasr.