

The Centre Reporter.



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THE CENTRE REPORTER

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The fellow who said this was going to be a cold winter should have no Christmas gift for lying.

Another prize fight is likely to end in death, which is the way all that kind of work should end in until prize fighters are all dead. The fight alluded to came off near Plymouth, Pa., the other day.

This issue closes Vol. 62 of the CENTRE REPORTER. Our next issue, January 9th, 1890, begins Vol. 63. A good ripe age, but as spry as a brook trout yet, and as the REPORTER keeps up with the times it will always be young, and outspoken upon topics of public interest.

A merry Christmas and happy New Year to all.

There is only one member of the Fifty-first Congress without an assignment to committee duty. That man is Mr. Chesdale of Indiana. He is a Republican, and his punishment comes in this way: He refused to vote for the caucus candidate for speaker, and supported the "blind preacher," declaring politics had nothing to do with congressional prayers.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie says that steel rails can be produced in this country as cheaply as in England. Why, then, cannot iron beams, rafters, joists, columns and all other forms of structural iron, be produced as cheaply in this country as in England? And why should Mr. Carnegie be protected by a bounty of \$28 a ton on these manufactures? Mr. Carnegie, if not too modest, might answer these questions in his next lecture.

Strangely notable events of the past few days: The disappearance of Mr. Dittman, of the Quaker City bank, Philadelphia, who disappeared although seen a very short time before he was missed, yet no trace of him has been found.

The death of the famous lawyer and railroad man, Franklin B. Gowen, -- was he murdered, did he shoot himself accidentally, or did he commit suicide, in his room in the Metropolitan hotel in Washington.

Granger Deeming, of Dauphin, in his speech in the State Grange, gave the Williamsgrove picnic a black eye. He says it is not run by the Grange, but it is a private speculation, and that impositions are practiced in the management. Other prominent Grangers are of the same mind as Deeming. The Grange seems to be misled by a few corn cobs who care only to prostitute this noble order to getting office and private gain. The Grange was organized for better purposes and many of its members are getting to see the nefarious aims of a few in the order.

The low prices of farm products at this time have hardly ever been paralleled. The December return of prices to the department of agriculture shows that the lowest average estimated value of corn in former years was 31.8 cents in 1875, and since that date 32.8 in 1885. The present average is 29.1 cents. The average of wheat estimates is 70.6 cents. This is not the lowest, as the average in December, 1884, was 64.5 in 1888, 68.1; in 1886, 68.7 cents. The average price of oats is lower than ever before reported. In 1878 it was 24.6 cents per bushel; at the present it is 23 cents. Prices of barley, rye and buckwheat are also very low. The average value of the potato crop is 42.1 cents. The lowest averages reported were 40 cents in 1884 and 40.4 in 1888.

The Boston Herald says the hottest region on the earth is on the southwest coast of Persia, where Persia borders the gulf of same name. For forty consecutive days in the months of July and August the thermometer has been known not to fall lower than 100°, night or day, and to often run up as high as 128° in the afternoon. At Bahrin, in the centre of the torrid part of the torrid belt, as though it were nature's intention to make the region as unbearable as possible, no water can be obtained from digging wells 100, 200, or even 500 feet deep, yet a comparatively numerous population contrive to live there thanks to copious springs, which break forth from the bottom of the gulf, more than a mile from shore.

The water from these springs is obtained by divers, who dive to the bottom and fill goatskin bags with the cooling liquid and sell it for a living. The source of these submarine fountains is thought to be in the green hills of Oman, some 500 or 600 miles away.

Christmas.

As the scholars are not agreed, within five or six years, as to the year in which Christ was born, it is hardly to be expected that the precise month and day of the Nativity should be accurately ascertained. It is generally acknowledged that the received chronology, which is in fact that of Dionysius Exiguus, in the sixth century, and which places the event in the year of Rome 754, and is about four years too late; yet the world will go on counting from that year, in spite of Biblical scholarship. And so, whatever uncertainties there be about the season of the year, it will suffice for most of us that the Christian world, for at least fifteen centuries, has observed the 25th day of December as the day of the Nativity. If it be not the day, it is at least hard to dispute it. It was not, however, without a good deal of dispute that this day was fixed. It would seem reasonable that the anniversaries of the later events of the Gospel should be remembered by the disciples who witnessed them, but the Nativity was altogether obscure, and in the earliest periods at which we have any record of the observance of this day we find a great discrepancy. Some communities of Christians celebrated the festival on the 1st or 6th of January, others at the time of the Passover, and others at the feast of Tabernacles. Long before the reign of Constantine, however, the season of New Year had been adopted for the celebration of the Nativity, though a difference existed between the customs of the Eastern and Western churches, the former observing the 6th of January, as the Armenians do to this day, and the latter the 25th of December. The custom of the Western church at last prevailed. According to St. Crisostom, Julius I, who was Bishop of Rome in the middle of the fourth century, on the solicitation of St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, caused diligent inquiry to be made, and following what appeared to be the best authenticated traditions, settled authoritatively the 25th of December as the anniversary of Christ's birth, the "Festum omnium metropolitum."

The laws of the Western States and Territories everywhere recognize and protect the rights of the first or "prior appropriator" of water. If the first settler on the banks of a stream draws off, in his ditch, one-half of the whole of the customary flow to irrigate his farm, he has the right to take his one-half or the whole flow forever, to the entire exclusion of any subsequent settler. But the same rule applies to rivers of large size. As the quick-witted Westerner stands by the side of one of the great rivers and looks over thousands of acres of desert land along its banks, he sees a fortune in the situation. Only get capital enough together, organize a great company, dig an immense canal which will "appropriate" all the water in the river, and you command the whole valley. It is the position of the Western railroads repeated. Instead of waiting for settlers to come and dig little ditches as they need them an immense capital digs one huge canal watering thousands of farms, and then draws settlers by advertisement and boom. So all over the West, throughout Colorado, in centre and southern California, in Montana and Idaho, on the Salt and Gila Rivers in southern Arizona, there are great companies, with capitals running into the millions, putting this idea into effect. The canals they dig are twenty, thirty, or even fifty miles long. The largest are a hundred feet wide and ten feet deep, very rivers in themselves. They follow the contour of the country, running back farther and farther from the river as the latter falls away. The main canal gives off lateral branches at frequent intervals, and by an ingenious system of gates, crossings, and ditches sends water to every foot of arable ground between it and the river. The land belongs to the Government, and is taken up by individual settlers at merely nominal prices under the "Desert Land Act." But the water belongs to the canal company, and it is this water that the settler really pays for. -- From "Water Storage in the West," by Walter Gillette Bates, in January Scribner.

Granger Deeming, of Dauphin, in exposing, in the State Grange, the private speculation in the Williamsgrove picnic, and the impositions practiced at it, forgot to mention that this was the picnic for which a lunatic member of the legislature from Centre county originated the ridiculously unconstitutional proposition to appropriate \$5,000 out of the people's money to fix up the ground. This was a funny piece of corn cob legislation at which even the Patrons laughed, as they knew that the public treasury was wisely shut against fool schemes and to the credit of the order they could not be led to put their foot in it, by an endorsement of such original statesmanship.

Political Arithmetic.

The way the Republicans managed to organize the Montana senate is probably about as great burlesque in representative government as this country has ever seen. That body is composed of 16 members, but an absentee of each party reduces the number to 14, seven Democrats and seven Republicans. On Thursday a Republican member moved the senate proceed to the election of officers. A Democrat called for the yeas and noes. The Republican governor ruled this unnecessary, and refused to have the roll called, although his attention was directed to the fact that the constitution of the State gives to two members of the senate the right to demand the yeas and noes: He held the constitution did not apply until the senate was organized. The Republican candidates for senate officers were then elected by ballot the chair again refusing the yeas and noes, they receiving seven votes out of 19. The refusal to have the yeas and noes called was to prevent the fact of no quorum appearing on the record. It was a double villainy. A well known decision of Speaker Blaine in 1875 was quoted for the chair's information, in which Mr. Blaine "held that there was no power in the chair to compel members to vote, and that only a majority of the house could conduct business; that the fact of a quorum being present in the house made no difference so long as a majority did not answer to the roll-call." The chair replied that his decision had been made and would not be changed. If this organization stands the Republicans boast they will elect two United States senators.

The constitution of the United States defines a quorum as follows: "A majority of each house shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day." Of course these proceedings of the Montana senate are revolutionary, and justify any form of resistance. A quorum is defined by our highest political authority, and has been universally accepted, as a majority of the legislative body. Therefore the Montana Republicans rest their case on the assertion 7 is a majority of 16, and a refusal to allow the constitutional right to call the yeas and noes, so that this astounding bit of political arithmetic may not appear on the journal. -- Pittsburgh Post.

Poverty and pauperism again prevail to an alarming extent among the miners in certain portions of Northumberland county, and the condition of affairs about Treverton, Shamokin, and Mount Carmel, and in Coal township is causing uneasiness among the substantial citizens of those places. Enforced idleness has created distrust and has bred discontent everywhere. Treverton, a prosperous village of 3,000 inhabitants only two months ago, has hardly 2,000 souls within its borders now. Actual hunger has forced the people to quit the place, leaving unpaid bills and horse rents. At Mount Carmel thousands of men and boys are idle, and the alarming state of affairs exists at Shamokin and in Coal township. The number of idle men at each of these places is augmented daily. The foreign element composes most of this army of idle men, and the men are in many cases becoming sullen and angry. Through sheer fear the call for bread was at first heeded, as the men, women and children begged from door to door. Some of the idle men had saved from their earnings, but this was soon consumed in buying "Polinski," a favorite alcoholic beverage. But since food has been denied them, threats of violence and murder are heard. Hungarians and Italians by the hundreds have left these places. Many have gone to New York, Philadelphia and Boston, as their friends have sent them money. Others cross the Atlantic to the home of their childhood, muttering words of discontent and cursing the "Land of the Free."

The present dullness in the coal regions and the depopulation of the towns is attributed to the open winter of 1889, and the same condition of weather just now.

The street railways of Philadelphia with their low fares, carried last year 150,000,000 passengers, and the average dividends on the actual paid up capital is 17 per cent. That is certainly a good investment. The receipts of the 10 active companies were \$7,163,177 and the expense \$4,412,710. The reduction of fares has increased the receipts without a corresponding increase of expense; the average cost of carrying a passenger having never been so low as this year -- less than 3 cents.

Milwaukee at the present time is the Eastern terminus of a flour blockade that extends as far West as Minneapolis and bids fair to last for several weeks.

Can't Handle the Freight.

Although this is not the banner month in receipts and shipments, the Chicago roads have never been so pressed for cars as thus far during December. The facilities for ocean transportation seem utterly inadequate to take care of the vast amount of traffic, especially grain, with which trunk lines are gorging the seaboard cities. Especially is this the case in Baltimore, where millions of bushels of corn are stored awaiting the means of shipment which do not come. The Baltimore elevators are now crammed to their utmost capacity, necessitating the temporary storing of the grain on tracks in the cars in which it was received. Thousands of cars are no idle in Baltimore for this reason, and there is no speedy prospect of breaking the grain and freeing the loaded cars.

A careful computation made on Friday from figures in the Rock Island offices shows that over 27,000 cars are now on their way to Baltimore, all of them loaded with corn. This vast amount of corn can be better realized when it is known that it would make a corn cake a foot high a foot wide, and over 3,800 miles long. These huge corn shipments are explanation of the fact that the Chicago east and west bound lines are doing the largest business in their history. Enough traffic is being offered to more than double the record. The roads are compelled to refuse it because they haven't cars with which to handle the immense amount of extra business urged upon them.

The Old and the New Journalist.

The managing editor of a large daily newspaper, a few days ago, gave a would-be contributor permission to prepare a two-column paper on a given topic for his journal. The editor's estimate was that the article could be prepared in one, or at most two days. But the writer declined the task, saying that it would require six weeks' labor.

The difference between the two estimates was the difference between the old and new journalism. The contributor belonged to the old time when literary composition was thought to be some mighty and mysterious toil, using up the phosphorus of the upper regions of the soul. In that ponderous old school of thought it was reckoned that a man's brain would blow up if he applied any sort of high pressure to it, and if a writer spent two hours in steady composition the proper thing was to go to bed and send for a doctor.

Fine times the newspaper would have in getting out if the old notions prevailed today!

Lightning speed is the word alike for writers, compositors and pressmen. The speed at which editors and reporters prepare their matter for the modern newspaper would indeed blow up the brain of the old fashioned literary and encyclopedic person. Mr. Murat Halsted has been writing a column an hour of newspaper matter for nearly forty years, and his powers have not failed in the slightest. His former editorial assistant, the late F. B. Plimpton, wrote at the same rate. This is the regular standard speed which all newspaper writers aspire to reach. Some other American editors have reached it.

The local reporter whose work is in fine print can generally prepare a column in an hour and a half to two hours. Reporters are frequently paid by the column in the large cities. The one cent papers often pay no more than \$3 a column. At that rate the reporter earns \$30 to \$35 a week and finds his own material. He must or he could not get his living.

It is not apparent that either the quality of newspaper work or the health of the writers suffers from this electric speed. Many newspaper editors live to be old men, and they are the youngest old boys of their generation. Modern newspaper work is not so encyclopedic as that of the past was, but it is far more readable and contains far more of the life of the time.

In some parts of Kansas corn is selling on the farm this year for 20 cents a bushel. A bushel of coal delivered on the same farms costs 21 to 23 cents a bushel. The Farmer's Alliance called the attention of the farmers to the fact that it might lessen the demand for coal, as well as perhaps raise the price of corn, to cease buying the coal and use the corn for fuel. Accordingly, corn is now actually being burned as fuel by numerous Kansas farmers. This, perhaps, looks wicked when Dakota farmers are said to be suffering for food. But the question is, is it any more wicked to burn corn for fuel than it is to put the price of coal so high that a bushel of corn will not pay for a bushel of coal?

It turns out that smokeless powder is, after all, an American invention, the discovery of Capt. Ledyard Ellsworth, of Hartford, Conn. It is further said that the German government is going to pay him half a million cash for the use of his formula, and \$10,000 a year for ninety-nine years.

Homes for City Working People.

Whatever is British must have a long and dignified name, hence it is not strange that the "Allotments and Small Holdings' associations" of England mean something much better than at first sound one might suppose. In fact, the association with the long name seems to be one of the best plans yet devised to give comfortable homes in the country to city working people. The plan is explained by Sydney Evershed in The New Review.

He purchases a tract of land within a few miles of a large city. He divides it into streets and squares, and also divides each acre into plots of a quarter acre. On each quarter acre he erects a working man's cottage at a cost of about \$750. The cottages are built in pairs, making one central wall do for two, for the sake of cheapness in construction. It is the same idea as that of the blocks of houses in cities, except that here there are only two houses together.

Each cottager will thus possess a house to himself and a garden where all the vegetables he needs can be grown, and where he can gain health and recreation which will renew him day by day for his city toil. The feature absolutely unique in the plan is this: The working man will pay no car fare to or from his place of business in the city. That will be included in his rent. The owner of the cottages contracts with the railway to transport his tenants yearly at so much, and he himself pays the sum from the money paid him by his tenants. When the tenant can afford it, he is allowed to purchase his home at cost.

The cottages are well built, have three bedrooms and an ample water supply, the ground is fenced and properly drained. Mr. Evershed believes he can give all these advantages to working men, including the free pass, for a rent of about \$1.25 per week, and still clear 44 to 5 per cent. on the money invested. That is twice as much as many investors in New York are receiving now. They are willing to take even 2 per cent. well secured. Mr. Evershed's plan is in no sense a charity. It is simply a humane Nineteenth century effort to feed and shelter those who do the world's work as well as pigs and horses are fed and sheltered.

Unless something of this kind is done, unless homes in the country are provided in which for working men to rear their families, the race will deteriorate rapidly. The deterioration is seen already painfully in the pale faces and dwarfed, stunted limbs and bodies of the second and third generations of city born and bred working people. Crowding in tenement houses is a sin against nature, which will in time destroy large numbers of our population.

Knights and Farmers.

Dec. 3 the National Farmers' alliance met in St. Louis. It is an organization of agriculturists founded by Evan Jones, of Texas, in 1875. At first it was merely a combination of small farmers to resist the encroachments of the rich ranchmen. Then its scope enlarged and it took in all matters pertaining to the advancement of agricultural interests. The association spread rapidly through the south. It is there that it flourishes most. By degrees, however, it is extending to the north as well.

There is now a Farmers' alliance, offensive and defensive, embracing a membership of not less than 2,250,000. Rumor is gradually taking the shape of fact that there is to be a union between the Farmers' alliance and Knights of Labor. The Knights now number 250,000 in good standing, dues paid up. They and the farmers have found that they have interests and aims in common enough to warrant united action. In addition, it is said that the Federation of Labor, the society of the united trades' unions, will in time join the organization. The three societies are not to become one, but will remain separate and act in concert on general questions. If the project succeeds, there will be formed the most powerful co-operative alliance of modern times. It can control any political party and make or unmake any politician at will. If the societies hang together, the question of labor and capital and all the other great economic questions will be settled their way as surely as water runs down hill.

It has come out at last that the Rothschilds are behind the syndicate to buy American breweries with British money. From Europe, Asia and Africa money has rolled into the banking houses of the Rothschilds till they are embarrassed how to invest it. There is no safe and profitable enterprise in which to place such great amounts in Europe. War may open at any time. What then? The United States is a great, rich and growing country. It is at peace with all the world, and likely to remain so. It has shown itself possessed of a government so stable that the greatest rebellion of modern times could not overturn it. Therefore the United States is the place for our money, say the sagacious Rothschilds. It is a large compliment to the American nation.

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Eighteen hundred and ninety is the year that will probably determine the result of the Presidential election of 1892, and perhaps the fortunes of the Democracy for the rest of the century. Victory in 1892 is a duty, and the beginning of 1890 is the best time to start out in company with The Sun.

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Instead of sending criminals to banishment in Siberia, it is said that Russia now proposes, in deference to American journalists, to scatter them about hereafter through different parts of the empire. Dear, dear!

The Parnell commission sat 120 days, and did not amount to anything. The only points scored were against himself and the British government. Five hundred witnesses were examined, twenty-eight of them being named O'Connor, twenty-four Walsh and twenty-two Murphy, while many of the rest were divided among the Burkes, Sullivans and O'Briens. The 500 witnesses answered 96,307 questions.

Some people insist that there is not time enough to prepare for an American World's fair in 1892. They point us to the fact that France was four years getting her in order, and then she was not ready on the opening day. Yes, but Frenchmen are not Americans. With our spirit of rush and our methods of working by machinery, we can do in two years in the United States what would require four years in Europe. We can get the World's fair ready for 1892.

Jersey justice will let even a person with "views" have fair play. A man died in New Jersey and left Henry George a legacy for the purpose of disseminating single tax doctrine. His heirs contested the will, as heirs always do when money is left to mankind instead of to themselves. The ground of the contest was that, by allowing George to have the money, the court would encourage his crank notions and therefore be responsible for their dissemination. The court refused to see it in that light, and Mr. George will get his money.