

PINHEAD REPUBLICS.

MOST OF THEM IN EUROPE OR ON ISLANDS OF THE SEA.

The Smallest in Area is Little More Than a Square Mile, and the Smallest in Population Numbers Fifty-five Souls—Simple Forms of Government.

When a person speaks of small republics, he is supposed to mean those of South America and Europe, which are marked on every map and described in every cyclopedia printed since they have become republics. The fact is, the world is spotted with small republics that are never heard of, some so small that they seem more like needle points than pinheads. A few of them are known to the most learned teachers of geography, but the majority of them would set the most of these teachers a task which would require more than a single day's research. These little republics are found on islands so diminutive that they are marked only on navigators' charts and again between and in the center of kingdoms. In area they run from less than a square mile up to about 100. In population they run from 55 people up to but little more than that many hundreds. They are all republics in that they are governed by the people, but their plans of government show a great many novelties.

To Tavolara may be accorded the distinction of being the smallest republic in point of population on the face of the globe. It is situated on an island about five miles long by five-eighths of a mile in width 13 miles off the northeast coast of Sardinia. Its population numbers about 55 people. The principal occupation of the inhabitants is fishing, the land being filled only enough to supply the needs of the islanders. The possession and absolute sovereignty of the island of Tavolara was formally granted by King Charles Albert of Sardinia to the Bartoloni family in 1836, and for more than half a century Paul I, king of Tavolara, reigned over it in peace.

On the 30th of May, 1882, King Paul died of heart disease, sitting in his chair, like the Emperor Vespasian, vainly endeavoring to write a will. His last words were a request that none of his relatives should succeed him on the throne of the island and that its inhabitants be allowed to govern themselves. None of the relatives ever filed a claim, and on March 27, 1886, the islanders held a mass meeting and decided to establish a republic. The matter was a simple one for them. A constitution was drawn up, which gives, by the way, equal suffrage to women and also provides for the election of a president every six years. The president receives no salary and is advised by a council of six, the members of which are elected by the people. There is no pay and no perquisites attached to any of the offices. The independence of Tavolara was formally recognized by Italy in 1887, but there is nothing on the records which shows any other country having taken notice of it.

If we were judging the countries by their area, then to Gouss must be awarded the honors. But while its area is not one-third as great as that of Tavolara its population is over twice as much, the total number of inhabitants being about 130. Gouss is situated on the flat top of a mountain in the Lower Pyrennes and occupies an area of but a fraction over a mile. The republic has existed since 1648 and is recognized as an independent state by both France and Spain. The government is vested in a council, consisting of 13 members, who serve seven years.

This council elects from its number one who discharges the duties of chief executive. He acts as tax collector, assessor, judge, etc., but from all his acts there is an appeal to the bishop of Laruns in the valley below. Other than these there are no officers, not even a clergyman. Neither is there a cemetery or any public institution whatever. The pass which leads to the adjacent Spanish parish of Laruns is so steep that the carrying of heavy burdens is an impossibility. The inhabitants of this tiny mountain republic have built a chute, therefore, down which they slide heavy articles and the bodies of their dead to the cemetery far below. Indeed the good inhabitants of Gouss are baptized, married and buried in the nearby Ossan valley. Since the seventeenth century the population has varied but little, and ambition and a desire to see the world calling the more venturesome from this republic in the clouds. The inhabitants are long lived and robust, are shepherds and weavers of cloth and seem entirely contented with their lot, having little ambition either for riches or power. Their language is a quaint mixture of French and Catalonian Spanish.

Another republic of dwarf proportions is that of Franceville, an island in the New Hebrides group, situated east of Australia and a short distance north of New Caledonia. It contains an area of some 85 miles, and its population consists of about 40 whites and 500 natives. The island was formerly a colony of France, but its independence was guaranteed it in 1879. Its government consists of a president and advisory council of eight, chosen by the people. The president, who is at present a Mr. R. D. Polk, a native of this country, is appointed a judge, from whose decisions there is no appeal. Equal suffrage is extended to all. White or black, male or female, may vote, but only the white male may hold office. The island republic is in a prosperous condition and carries on a good trade with France.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Voices of Nations.
The Tartars are supposed to have, as a nation, the most powerful voices in the world. The Germans possess the lowest voices of any civilized people. The voices of both Japanese and Chinese are of a very low order and feeble compass and are probably weaker than any other nation. Taken as a whole, Europeans have stronger, clearer and better voices than the inhabitants of the other continents.—London Tit-Bits.

THE CAT CAME IN.

Is It the Reincarnation of the Old Musician Who Didn't Come Back?

"Hants? Why of course I believe in them," said Wes Hearn to a group of congenial Bohemians crowded around the lunch counter about midnight. "There's a hant now," and he pointed to a big black cat which stealthily made its way in the door and under a table, out of the shadow of which his eyes glowed red and green. "That cat's a hant and a mascot all in one."

"One stormy night about four years ago he came in here, and he's never been away since. There used to be an old musician who visited us every night steady for years. He used to come in hollow eyed and haggard. He never said a word, but laid down his money, got his bracer—Old Tom gin—always the same, and went on his way. The time the cat came in the night man noticed that the old musician hadn't appeared. It was a stormy night, too, just about this time. The wind howled and moaned, and the lightning flashed in red ribbons, while the thunder cracked like the guns of battle and reverberated in a boom that made all the dishes in the house rattle. It was a bad night, too dismal by far for people to be out in. Everybody was sitting around the stove talking. Just as the clock was striking 12, Mr. Frazee expressed wonder that the old man, meaning the musician, hadn't come in. At that moment the big black cat came in and took his place by the stove and never uttered a meow, and he's never been away since, and, more than that, he never sleeps. If that cat should go to sleep, I believe the house would fall down. Once in awhile he gets a little bit sick, and then everything goes wrong."

"But the strange part of the story is that the old musician never came back. Two days later he was pulled out of the river dead. He must have jumped in the same night that cat came. I believe the spirit of that old man is in that cat. What makes me believe so is that as soon as a band passes that door playing that cat makes for the river as fast as he can tear. He goes away the moment any music is heard, and he doesn't tarry when he starts. What he goes to the river for I don't know. Perhaps it was music that drove the old man crazy. I've heard some music that would drive anybody so."—Florida Times-Union.

Dubbed a Visionary.

The probability that vehicles driven by steam would be the future means of transportation on land was very well foreseen 20 years before the last century closed by Oliver Evans of Philadelphia, the inventor of the high pressure steam engine. As early as 1786 he petitioned the legislature of Pennsylvania for the exclusive right to use his inventions for road wagons to be propelled by steam. The word locomotive had not then come into use. This privilege was denied, but the Maryland legislature granted the right for 14 years. There appeared at one time good prospects of Evans obtaining the necessary financial support to apply his steam engine to the propulsion of boats and road wagons, but some cautious capitalist of that day determined to have B. H. Latrobe, an accomplished architect and engineer, report upon the schemes that Evans was advocating. Latrobe reported strongly against the steam engine, saying that the inventor was a visionary. This report ruined Evans' career and deprived America of the benefits of the steam engine in transportation for two generations longer.

By a curious irony of fate the son of this same Latrobe performed important engineering services in building the Baltimore and Ohio, the first railroad in this country where a steam engine was used successfully.—Locomotive Engineering.

Don't Judge by Appearances.

A one legged street beggar, who, rain or shine, sits every day with outstretched hand on the steps of a warehouse in a down town cross street is quite a philosopher in his way. He says that, so far as his experience goes, little can be judged regarding the benevolence of men or women by their appearance. Sometimes, he says, he will see a man approaching who seems to be the personification of charity allied with opulence. The beggar stretches forth his hand with confidence, but withdraws it with disappointment. Then there hurries by a Mephistophelian looking creature, seedy perhaps, with a cynical smile on his face, who drops a quarter into the beseeching palm. Among women, the beggar asserts, the best dressed are seldom the most charitable. There are exceptions to the rule, of course, but the prevalent theory that a street beggar can "size up" a pedestrian by his appearance is erroneous.—New York World.

Falling Eyes.

"I think the eye power of the present generation of civilized men must have deteriorated a good deal," said an oculist to me the other day. "I am called upon to examine so many young persons nowadays whose eyes show no symptoms of disease or strabismus, but are simply unable to do the ordinary amount of work required of schoolboys, schoolgirls, college students or moderate readers without showing symptoms of overwork."

"This weakness seems to be constitutional, and glasses are required which lessen the muscular strain on the eyes only. In spite of the invention of the typewriter, which has relieved the eye of so much work, the state of things is almost equally as prevalent in business circles as among students."—New York Herald.

A Juvenile Reporter.

"Now, tell me," said the aunt to little Annie, who had been taken to the concert for the first time in her life, "what did they do?"
"Oh, there was a lady screaming because she had forgotten to put on her sleeves, and a waiter played on the piano all the time!" was the child's reply.—Corriere della Sera.

Were Felt Is the Blue Fox.

In Siberia the skin of the blue fox, or Isatin, is highly prized, and the first prize for the horse races of the Anadyr is a fine pelt. According to M. Langkavel, the blue fox still inhabits the Lapland part of Scandinavia, the islands of the White sea, parts of northern Russia, the coasts of Siberia, the new Siberian islands and in America the Aleutian islands, Atton, Onalaska—the Fox islands—Alaska, the Commander islands, the Mackenzie river district, Labrador and Newfoundland. The blue fox is a variety of the white fox, so rare that of 100 white fox skins only four or five will have the bluish or cloudy tinge.—London Globe.

Temporary Change of Lodgings.

At Monte Carlo a gambler had won the maximum at rouge et noir three times in succession.

"There's a fellow running off with a splendid haul of bank notes!" said a spectator.

"Oh," carelessly interjected the crozier, "that makes no difference to the bank. It is merely a bit of our money sleeping out for the night!"—Paris Petit Nicolas.

Obeeyed Orders.

Employer (to new office boy)—If any one calls, James, be sure and remember that I am not in. (Half an hour later.) Didn't you hear me call, you young rascal?

James—Yes, sir, but I t'ought yer wasn't in.—London Punch.

A Shade Too Yielding.

Binks—Why so gloomy?
Jinks—My wife let me have the last word in an argument this morning.
"What of that?"
"That shows that she is going to do as she pleases anyhow."—New York Weekly.

All of J. M. Barrie's stories are said to have grown out of his everyday life, and in the young men who are pictured walking knee deep in the heather of Thrums and vicinity one can find the boyhood and the present life of the brilliant young Scotchman.

She was a wealthy soprano, and at the concert sang, "Oh, For the Wings of a Dove!" yet an hour later at supper she took the wings, legs and most of the breast of a turkey and then passed her plate for "more stuffing."

The German name for tram car is "pferd strassen-eisenbahnwagen." It looks formidable, but so would the English equivalent if written in one word in the German style—"horse-road-railway-carriage."

The descriptions given by Strabo of the osier houses of the Gauls and Britons might be applied to human habitations in central Africa today.

For an example of pure and unalloyed contempt take a barber's opinion of the young man who is growing a full beard.



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that Ayer's Sarsaparilla, out of the great number of similar preparations manufactured throughout the world, was the only medicine of the kind admitted at the World's Fair, Chicago? And why was it that, in spite of the united efforts of the manufacturers of other preparations, the decision of the World's Fair Directors was not reversed?

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