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EARTHQUAKES.

The awful disaster which has befallen cities in Calabria and around the Messina straits has brought sorrow to many a home not only in Italy but in this country, where relatives are anxiously waiting for news from those across the sea—many in vain, because death has suddenly, without a moment's warning, stilled the hand that used to pen the loving messages conveying good wishes for success and hope of speedy reunion. To those whose joys have thus been dashed to the ground, we can only extend a word of sympathy, and we sincerely hope that they may find consolation. It was an awful visitation. A hundred thousand souls hurled into eternity in a moment! No wonder if to the survivors the voice of the storm, the rolling thunder of the bursting earth crust, and the roar of the all-engulfing tidal wave sounded like the tramp of Gabriel summoning men to judgment.

Calabria has frequently been the scene of similar calamities. The destruction wrought in 1783 was caused by several earthquake waves. The city of Messina was destroyed at that time, and the loss of life was estimated at 100,000, as now. Calabria was visited by earthquakes in 1905, and again last year.

No country has been absolutely free from earthquakes, but in some places the damage wrought is not considerable. The committee appointed by a British association for the investigation of earthquakes has found that they emanate from certain centers which have been indicated on the map. One of the most important of these centers, or regions, comprises farther India, the Sunda Isles, New Guinea, and Northern Australia. Another takes in the most important folds in the crust of the Old World, including the mountain chains from the Alps to the Himalayas. Italy is situated within this center. In the six-year period, from 1890 to 1904, no fewer than 174 earthquakes have been recorded in this district. The bottom of the Tyrrhenian sea, between Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia, has been observed and found to be sinking.

Very little is known about the interior of the earth, but from the movement of earthquake shocks through the crust, the conclusion is formed that the crust is not very thick—31 to 37 miles—and that the core of the earth probably is gaseous. Seismographs are now closely studied in many parts of the world, and scientists hope to learn some of the secrets of the depths below, by the aid of these instruments.

IN VENEZUELA.

The latest report from Venezuela is to the effect that there has been fighting between the adherents of Castro and the soldiers of the new President, Gomez, and that the latter were defeated, temporarily. It is expected that the fighting will be continued.

In the meantime, Gomez seems to have established himself firmly and negotiations will be entered into with foreign governments for a settlement of the difficulties that resulted in the demonstrations made by Holland.

Castro's course is the subject of a great deal of guessing. Did he, as suggested in a London cable to a New York paper, plan the revolution himself? Did he, actually, entrust Gomez, his friend, with the mission of leading a revolution in order to prevent his enemies from taking the lead? That would be an exceedingly shrewd move, if he considered a revolution inevitable. But Castro is credited with being one of the shrewdest diplomats now living. Had he been the head of a strong government of a world power, he would have dictated the policy of the world.

HUMAN LIFE.

Whether the duration of human life is actually increasing or whether the records are more accurate, it is certain that a great many persons are known to pass the century mark in our days. The Springfield Republican makes a note of the following cases:

"In 1872 a negro woman died at Albany at the age of 106. Her birth was on record, and she remembered many a custom and many an event of the past, and had seen Sir William Johnson, last Sunday, the 100th birthday of Mrs. Mary D. Farrell was celebrated at Midland Park, N. J.; and in Hackensack, N. J., Mrs. Ann Van Riper lives, and there are great preparations making for commemorating her 100th anniversary in February. Mrs. Van Riper fell downstairs four years ago, but without any injury; had she not been blind, that accident would not have happened. Time has not impaired her mental faculties. She has two daughters, one 70 and one 66 years old, and she calls the younger 'my baby daughter.' Then on Sunday died William Ives, 105 years old, at Fredonia, N. Y., English by birth, and a vegetarian. Some of these venerable people have had fads, like Mr. Ives, but most of them have lived about as it was convenient for them. Some never drank alcoholic liquors, many never used tobacco, while others never went without their pipe, their smoke or their chew. In olden days most of them snuffed, but snuff is out of fashion. The chief common characteristic of the century livers is that none of the lot were remarkable for anything else except their 'extraordinary survival of their reasonable period.' Exceptions are to be noted—see Sir Moses Montefiore, the Jewish philanthropist, who died in 1885, being 101 years old; he had a useful career, up to the very verge of

his departure. Another was Dr. Christopher Columbus Moore, who died in Kentucky at an even century, in the same year; he had fallen in no faculty except the faculty of living any longer."

Throughout the civilized world, it is claimed by some, the duration of human life has steadily increased. In the sixteenth century, in the city of Geneva, one individual of 25 died annually. In the British navy the mortality used to be one in every ten. Now it is one in a hundred. In London, the mortality in the middle of the last century was one in 32. In the year 1838 it was one in 36. During the latter part of the last century the mortality of Russia was one in 27; Prussia, one in 36; France, one in 39; Holland, one in 39; Belgium, one in 43; England, one in 53; Greece, one in 30.

Before the flood the life of man lasted several hundred years. The ages of ten persons are given in the Mosaic record, varying from 969 to 365 years. But these ages were probably not exceptional. Others may have lived just as long. After a few generations subsequent to the flood, the age of man declined. The Psalmist contemplating the age of man in his time said, "the days of our years are threescore and ten, or even by reason of strength, fourscore years, yet is their pride but labor and sorrow, for it is soon gone, and we fly away." And this remains true. The chief point, therefore, is not to have many years but to use those we have well. And they are swiftly passing.

SUGAR CONSUMPTION.

From a report by the bureau of statistics the interesting fact is learned that the people of this country consumed seven billion pounds of sugar last year, which means about eighty-two and a half pounds per capita. In other words, Americans now eat sugar to the amount of over half their weight, in a year. The increase since 1900 is from 58.8 per capita to 82.5 pounds. The value of the sugar consumed last year is placed at \$372,000,000. Of this amount 21 per cent was produced in this country and the balance imported. Domestic production has trebled since 1900, owing largely to the development of the beet sugar industry, but the nation still depends upon foreign countries for about four-fifths of its sugar.

The world's production of sugar in 1907 is placed at 32,179.7 millions of pounds, which was almost equally divided between the cane and beet—49.7 per cent for beet and 50.3 for cane. And the United States, which contains less than 6 per cent of the estimated population of the earth, consumes 22 per cent of this total sugar product of the world. The per capita consumption of sugar in Europe is but 27 pounds, or about one-third what it is in America. The Turk consumes but 7 pounds of sugar annually, the Greek but 8 and the Italian only 6. In Germany the per capita consumption amounts to 34 pounds and to 35 pounds in Sweden and to 55 pounds in Denmark.

Last year the home production of sugar amounted to 1,511.5 millions of pounds, of which 967.2 millions were from beets and 544.3 millions from cane. From Porto Rico we imported 408.1 millions of pounds; from Hawaii, 821 millions; from the Philippines, 25.2 millions. From Cuba and other countries a total of 4,366.7 millions of pounds were bought.

To the extravagant consumption of sugar many trace the bad teeth of Americans, with or without reason. Possibly American teeth are not really, any worse than those of other nationalities although Americans can better afford to pay dentists for their services. Germany, too, is well advanced in dentistry although its sugar consumption falls far short of that of the United States.

THE INDIANS.

Francis E. Loupp, commissioner of Indian affairs, in his annual report, expresses the hope that before long the work of the Indian bureau can be dispensed with, because the Indians will be far enough advanced to shift for themselves.

Mr. Loupp shows, in his report, that the "blanket" Indian, the old warrior who used to sit around and draw rations from the government, has become obsolete. Most of the Indians of the day have received some education and nearly all of them have developed a business ability that enables them to take very good care of themselves in their dealings with the white men. Where the allotments of lands have been made the Indians, instead of being robbed by land agents and promoters, as was woefully predicted, have turned farmers, stock raisers and ranchmen and have been adding to

their property values. In many parts of the west the Indians are the actual leaders in the work of reclaiming land by irrigation and thousands of them are earning good wages every year in different kinds of farm, ranch and railroad work.

On the educational question the Commissioner expresses decided views. He thinks that the Indian children should be educated on the reservations, and not taken to eastern schools and taught things of no value to them when they return to their own people. He declares that the "whole method of conducting these schools is conducive of unwholesome conditions for young people who have been always accustomed themselves, and are descended from an ancestry always accustomed, to the freest open-air life." He suggests that they be taught farming, stock raising, etc., instead of stenography, geometry and similar arts and sciences. This seems to be a practical suggestion.

England to India: "Give us a rest."

All hens that lay eggs these days lay golden eggs.

It has been sentenced but will he stay sentenced?

Graft and mushrooms grow best in dark, damp places.

Some people cannot distinguish between rejoicing and "hurrayah."

No matter what others may do the negro press will never give up its colored supplement.

Much of the testimony of the Hains case is about as interesting as the news in a last year's almanac.

Couldn't Woodrow Wilson supplement his "Government by Committee" with a work on "Government by Secret Service?"

"To caucus or not to caucus?" That is the question for Charles P. Taft, Representative Burton and Senator Foraker.

Whenever any committee undertakes to remodel an old law the first thing it does is to provide for an increase of salaries.

When all the forests are converted into forest reserves it will be impossible to take to the woods without a special government permit.

The President is warned against the dangers of the African jungles. The jungle doesn't exist that can give him the sleeping sickness.

At Long Beach ostrich farm an ostrich attacked a girl, badly mutilating her nose. The girl should not have been nosing around.

J. Pierpont Morgan owns several hundred Bibles, some of them very rare. This may make him a bibliophile but not necessarily a biblical scholar.

The adherents of Castro and Gomez have locked horns. If they do not separate and behave themselves, Uncle Sam may have to take the bull by the horns.

A Chinaman, with \$15,000 in cash in his purse, died of starvation on a Southern Pacific train. He had enough to pay for dining car meals or to tip the porter, but not enough for both and so he perished of hunger.

"Superior food, shelter and raiment are all the millionaire can get out of life," says Mr. Rockefeller. Yes, but he gets them so much easier and of such a vastly superior quality to what the ordinary man can ever hope for.

A paleolithic stone instrument has been discovered in Medina county, Ohio, and the state geologist, Prof. G. Frederick Wright, declares that Medina county was the home of paleolithic man. Probably he was among the first Buckeye office seekers.

Mr. Eustache Miles, a magazine writer, must believe in the good old doctrine of predestination, for he says that "just as there are some people who are born to be fast workers and others who are born to be slow workers, so there are some people who are born to be plump and others who are born to be thin."

RARE TRADE DOLLAR.

New York Times.
An extremely rare trade dollar, dated 1884, in brilliant proof condition, was sold at auction on November 27th in Chicago. The existence of a coin of this character and date has not been known until recently, and a specimen never has been offered before at public sale. From what information can be obtained, about ten pieces of this character were struck at the mint in 1884.

BRADSTREET'S BUSINESS FORECAST

It would, of course, be unwise to say that the outlook is entirely clear. There is still a measure of doubt as to the reality of some of the improvement shown on the surface of things. Shocks and damage like those received slightly over a year ago are not at once taken up and repaired. Shorter hours are still common in industry, and some time must elapse before public buying ability equals the business trade. Some of the optimism displayed in the securities markets a month or so ago was not fully shared in by many lines of business. There are problems to be met and solved before the trade and industry are fully restored to the normal. One of these is the question whether the admittedly excessive cost of conducting trade and industry, because of high prices for food and hence for labor, will not have to be adjusted. Bearing upon this is the probable proportion of the European demand for our products. In 1909, in view of the fact that trade among our best foreign customers is still very much depressed. Our winter-wheat crop at present does not promise to be burdensome, and foreign trade is depressed. Then the tariff revision outlook is not entirely settled yet. It seems, too, as if further growth in general trade, which is confidently looked for in 1909, might have some important temporary effects upon the money markets and possibly upon security prices, as will the continuance of what seems to be necessary, very large future borrowings by railroads for improvement. In the end, of course, these

expenditures must redound to the benefit of general business. Stocks are not burdensome, a hand-to-mouth buying movement having long prevailed, and, moreover, a well settled policy of repression has been carried out, as a result of which speculation and overstretching of credits in distributive lines have been minimized. With past experience as a guide, and with events of 1907 and 1908 immediately in mind, it is to be observed that past history does not necessarily repeat itself along precisely similar lines. Governing these manifestations more and more, nowadays, are the changes in trading conditions, the growth of population and the diversification and the solidarity of industry, which all serve to absorb shocks, and to radiate matters in a way superior to what was possible in other years of strain. All things considered, the country really is and, what is equally important, really feels in far better shape than a year ago, and this gain in optimistic sentiment, with the knowledge that we have been partially spared one of the worst effects of previous great panics—long continued and acute depression, with the consequent sacrifice of business life and slaughter of capital—is in itself a great gain for trade confidence. There is a sense of deep relief that the community has passed so safely through a great crisis, and it is with a feeling of chastened and yet cheerful conservatism that the business world looks forward to the year 1909 with a fair degree of confidence, but with little expectation of a boom.

five of which are said to have been destroyed, which fact would make this latter-day dollar scarce, the famous 1894 dollar, which at least six authenticated specimens exist. So great is the rarity of this 1894 trade dollar, that even the well-filled cabinets of the Philadelphia mint do not contain a specimen. The trade dollar was authorized by act of February 12, 1873, for the purpose of competing with the Spanish and Mexican dollars in China; to afford a market for the surplus silver produced by the mines of the Pacific coast and to further the commerce of and importers from China with silver in a convenient form for payment for commodities instead of being compelled to purchase Mexican dollars for the purpose.

NUTRIMENT OF HENS' EGGS.

London Mail.
In a hen's egg only one-fifth of the substance is nutritious, one-ninth is refuse, and the remainder, the greater portion, is water. White shelled eggs are not quite as good as yellow ones, for they contain a trifle more water and a little less fat. But your purveyor knows this and frequently colors his white eggs with coffee. Judged by the amount of nutriment, a goose's egg is the most valuable. Next in order are ducks', guinea fowl's hen's, turkeys' and plovers'. Eggs contain a large quantity of sulphur, which is purifying to the blood and good for the complexion. To get the best egg you must feed your fowls on grain, and to cook it in the most digestible way you must boil the water. Heat the water to 180 degrees and leave the egg in it for ten minutes. You will then digest every morsel. But if you boil it for three minutes no less than one-twelfth of it will fail to be digested. Thus if you eat two eggs boiled for three minutes every day you waste five dozen in a year.

INAUGURATION DAY.

Washington Star.
The senate has gone on record in approval of the plan to change the date of the inauguration day, but the house has never voted on it. From session to session it has remained in committee, with an occasional revival of interest on the part of individual members. Yet it may be confidently asserted that a majority of the members approve of the proposition and would vote for it if it came before the house in form for final disposal. But the year passes without action. The joint resolution remains one of the perennial items of unfinished business because nobody in the house feels sufficiently courageous to move actively and persistently to get it out of committee.

JUST FOR FUN.

"Her repartee was brilliant."
"Yes," they say she knew everything money can buy."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Young Man—Why do you advise Miss Smith to go abroad to study music? You know she has no talent.
Old Man—I live next door to Miss Smith.—Town and Country.

O'Hoolihan—Old folks 't see some mirrors tho'd do for a Christmas present.
Clerk—Yes, sir. Hand mirrors?
O'Hoolihan—No. Ol want want that yez kin see yer face in, b'gorry.—Judge.

"Pa, is an abyss a sleepy hollow?"
"No, child. Whatever put such an idea into your head?"
"Well, pa, whenever you hear of or read about an abyss, it is always yawning."—Baltimore American.

"Why are yez so disgusted, Dennis?"
"I just hear-nd I hear-nd I hear-nd another liar. And the man that was called a liar said the other man would have to apologize or there would be a fight." And why should I make you look so sad?" "The other man apologized."—Chicago Record-Herald.

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