



REMARKABLE POLITICAL DOINGS IN JAPAN



Present Conditions in the Island Empire Seem to Indicate the Probability of a Revolution.

THESE are exciting times for Japan. The general elections are going on. An election in the island empire has never been a matter of wide public interest until now. Heretofore the Japanese people have paid little attention to the political game as it has been developed under the new regime. Still under the domination of the old traditions, they have been satisfied to trust to the existing government the management of their interests and to let it go at that.

Now, however, it is quite a different thing. The situation is so changed that a genuine political crisis is impending. The slow moving and patient Japanese proletariat has been transformed into a mass of unsatisfied questioners. It is the existing commercial and financial depression that has brought the country to the verge of a panic and has caused the people to wake up and ask why.

Although Japan has adopted the form of a popular government, the voice of the people in affairs of state is heard but as from afar. While the government has the outward appearance of a constitutional monarchy, it is an error to assume, as we of the west are likely to do, that it is conducted on liberal principles as such things are understood in America. The form is all right—there are a constitution, a ministry, a diet composed of two houses and a judiciary to interpret the law. There the similarity to a liberal government ends.

Nowadays the basis of popular representation is the franchise, and in Japan the total number of voters in the empire is under 800,000, less than 2 per cent of the population as compared with 25 per cent in France and 21 per cent in the United States. In addition to the aristocracy, the voting privilege is confined to commoners with property and taxpaying qualifications, so that the exercise of the franchise belongs only to the upper and part of the middle classes. The great laboring class, made up of about 90 per cent of the population of the empire, is entirely without representation in government affairs. The only constitutional privilege which this class possesses is the right of petition to the mikado, and that is so hedged in by difficulties due to court etiquette that it is of little practical value.

The influence of even this limited electorate is restricted absurdly. The house of peers, the upper legislative branch, is made up of male members of the imperial family, hereditary nobility, some life members who are military and naval heroes nominated by the mikado, and the members nominated by fifteen electors in each fu or ken who pay the highest taxes. These latter nominations must be affirmed by the mikado, and the members may serve seven years. From this it will be seen that the upper house is composed of a large majority of princes and nobles and a minority of members nominated by a very limited and wealthy class, including less than 700

voters. This is rather a poor showing for a representative government. Nor is the lower house, the so-called popular branch of the diet, invested with the exercise of genuine legislative power. Its members are elected by the small part of the population which has the franchise, scarcely 2 per cent of the whole. There are at present 368 seats distributed among forty-five cities and prefectures, called fuses and kens in Japan. This gives an average of 2,000 votes to a district which would have on an equal basis of population

election is ordered, the campaign is not carried on along party lines. Each candidate makes an independent campaign, with his own issues and personality as the basis. It is not until after election that the parties are organized, and party lines rest very lightly. Japanese parties are more a grouping for individual advantage than a means to extend definite political principles.

In fact, the Japanese government makes no pretense of representing the people or of carrying out their wishes.

statements. The ministry is almost precisely like that of European powers—the members hold office until they resign. It is known that he will accept their resignations. In this matter the mikado's influence seems to be paramount, although in case of crisis it is usual for him to consult the genro. Although the mikado is supposed to attach great weight to the advice of the genro, he is at perfect liberty to reject it if he chooses.

As to the personality of the present sovereign of Japan there is a diversity

least he is venerated as the spiritual and temporal head of the nation, but American residents in Japan believe that this sentiment is not altogether sincere and that the people are beginning to believe that their ruler is being used as a tool by the oligarchy which is their actual master.

It is also well known even by the lower classes in Japan that the game of politics is being played on the "no fair" system. There is little doubt that at the present time seats in the lower house may be purchased in the open

and brought matters to a crisis with unexpected celerity is the fact that Japan is now struggling with the very hardest of hard times. As long as the government kept things booming there was little complaint from the 10 per cent of the population which has no part in the conducting of the government. As it is, the oligarchy finds itself confronted with a demand for a division of its power. Perhaps its very existence is at stake. Among the greater causes which have helped to create this situation are the diversion

The Japanese People No Longer Content to Be Governed by a Self-Seeking Oligarchy.

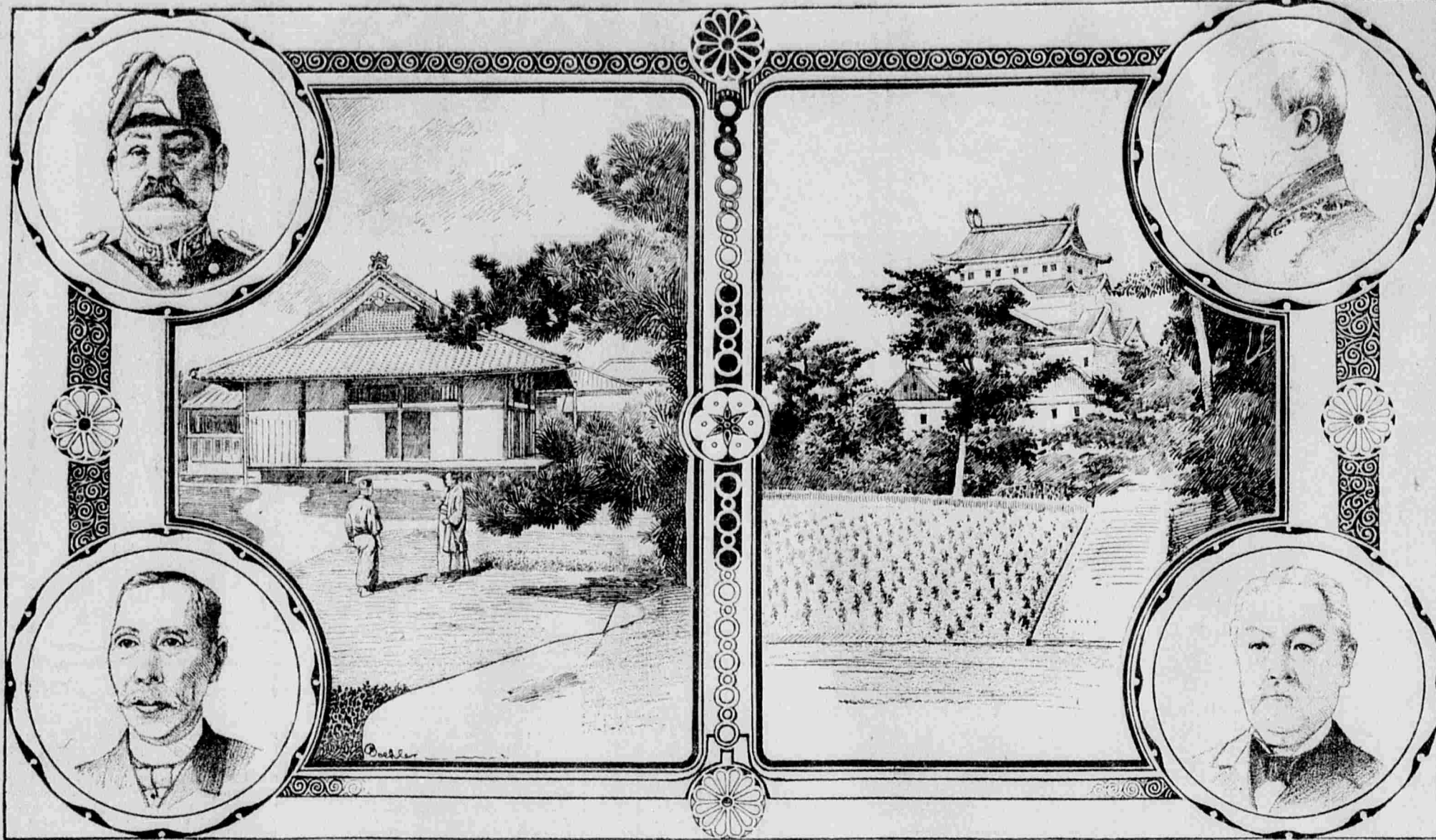
out money. Everything that could be squeezed out of the people had been used to prosecute the campaign in Manchuria. Taxation was already out of proportion to the earnings of the people. It could not be increased without danger of revolution. All the available assets contrived to secure the foreign war loans, and there was left apparently nothing to offer as security for further accommodation. The finances of the empire were really in a very precarious condition. Maddened by the failure to secure an indemnity at the peace settlement, the rank and file was suspicious and inclined to be critical of the government and everything connected with its administration.

Driven to desperate measures, the men at the head of affairs proceeded to manufacture assets which might be used to effect a new loan. First Korea and Manchuria were hoisted as the very gardens of the world, and great multitudes of Japanese were encouraged to emigrate to those countries. Many of those emigrants, having failed to prosper, have made their way back to the islands. Another clever scheme to raise money was the so-called nationalization of the railways. The government took over all the railways, paying for them with bonds. Thus a considerable source of revenue and acquired something which might be hypothecated in a pinch. Another scheme was the organization of many industrial projects with the expectation that foreign capital would be tempted to invest in them.

It has been demonstrated more than once that nothing will collapse more quickly than a boom which is built on a fictitious basis. The reaction in Japan is nothing more than might have been expected, and now that it has come nobody seems to be surprised. It has led to a scrutiny of the government and its policy by the people that must result in an overthrow of the present arrangement.

The Japanese masses are inclined to put the responsibility of the nation's financial distress on the elder statesmen—Okuma, Yamagata, Ito and Matsukata. As leader of the opposition, Okuma is least open to this criticism, for he has never been admitted to the full privileges of the genro and has had less to do with the ambitious plan for expansion than the others. He is a professed democrat and as such is more of a favorite among the masses than with the aristocrats, who fear him and his influence with the common people. Yamagata is an aristocrat, and he comes in for a full share of the popular criticism. Prince Ito, who has tried to take a middle course and in so doing has shown himself to be worthy to be called a great statesman of the orient, it is felt that all Japan is looking for relief, and he alone among the members of the genro seems to have the confidence of all classes of the Japanese people.

GEORGE H. FARRAR.



ITO.
YAMAGATA.

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OKUMA'S HOME.

YAMAGATA'S HOME.

OKUMA.
MATSUKATA.

in the United States about 26,000. It is really a body of aristocrats whose political aspirations are anything but democratic.

This diet is divided into political parties, but these parties are not like those of America or even of European states. Although Japan has adopted the names of such institutions, she has not yet developed a system of government by party. The groups which take party names are seldom carried over into a new diet. When a general

attitude is that the electorate—such as it is—is permitted by the mikado to assist him in administering the government. The lower house has practically no power of initiative. All new measures of moment originate in the house of peers, and the house of representatives never thinks of opposing anything suggested by the government authorities.

The chief factors in the Japanese political system are the mikado, his ministers and the so-called genro or elder

of opinion. Some of those best qualified to speak declare that he is a mere figurehead, leaving the care of the government to his ministers and occupying himself with the minutiae of court etiquette and the more important business of his own personal comfort. The crown prince is generally regarded as unusually dull and uninteresting, and he is never entrusted with anything of importance. There is a great difference of opinion among foreigners as to the estimation in which the mikado is held by the masses. Outwardly at

market. This political degeneracy is so evident and so far-reaching that several organizations for the reform of politics have come into existence. The last elections have been attended with such corruption and fraud that most of the leading journals have made mention of the fact. It has been charged that votes have been bought as low as 2 yen and that seats in the prefectural assemblies were to be had for from 2,000 yen upward.

The chief thing, however, that has discredited the rule of the oligarchy

to the oligarchy by means of subsidies and substantial favors from the government of most of the wealth produced by the expansion of the nation since the war with Russia, the expenditure of so much of the national revenue for increased armament, the increase of taxation which is the result of this policy and the bringing of the nation to the verge of bankruptcy which has followed.

At the close of the war with Russia the Japanese found themselves with-

A Half American Member of the British Cabinet; Winston Churchill In Line For the Premiership

FROM an American viewpoint the most interesting feature of the recent reconstruction of the British cabinet was the new premier's choice of Winston Churchill as president of the board of trade. That gives the fortunate young man a seat in the cabinet at the comparatively youthful age of thirty-four, a distinction which is as rare as it is gratifying.

For Winston Churchill is the son of an American woman whose brilliant and entirely satisfactory career has made for her a warm place in the hearts of Englishmen without in any way detracting from the esteem felt for her in her own country. As Jennie Jerome, daughter of the well known and genial Leonard Jerome of New York, she was a general favorite, and when she became the wife of Lord Randolph Churchill, third son of the Duke of Marlborough, who even at that early age gave promise of an unusual career, it was the opinion of all those who knew her that the young nobleman was getting a great bargain. Her good looks, abundant wit and unvarying good nature made an impression on the English social world that has never grown indistinct. As Mrs. Cornwallis West she is still a mother of whom even so pompous a statesman as Winston Churchill well may be proud.

That is one reason why Americans are interested in Winston Churchill and pleased to hear that he is doing so well. Another is because the young man is always inclined to pride himself on his good American blood and to ascribe his success in life to the fact of his half American parentage. He does not hesitate to assert at all times and in all places that he owes everything to his clever and still very handsome mother and that she has saved him from many of the mistakes which have been made by other Spencer Churchills.

Although the president of the board of trade is not as lofty a personage as the first lord of the admiralty, for instance, he is actually an individual of much importance. It is a position which corresponds to that of the secretaryship of commerce and labor in this country, and he who holds it is capable of exerting a wide influence. For this reason it has always been regarded as a stepping stone to something higher. Joseph Chamberlain went from it to the post of secretary of state for the colonies, and Mr. Churchill's predecessor, David Lloyd George, has become chancellor of the exchequer. So there is no reason why Mr. Churchill should not step from it

to something that will be even more gratifying to his ambitious mother, perhaps to the dignity of prime minister.

In the meantime Mr. Churchill will find plenty to do. The board of trade of the British cabinet is a working institution, and the man at the head of it has abundant opportunity to exhibit executive ability, if it is at his command. It is far more comprehensive in its activity than the American department of commerce and labor. All sorts of duties and powers have been added to it from time to time until it has become an institution of great importance. For instance, it has the control and supervision of all railroads.

Mr. Churchill will have control of the fisheries, a mighty responsibility in Great Britain. He must also set in motion all of the machinery connected with bankruptcy and must keep a watchful eye on the doings of corporations and business concerns of every description. At the head of the department of labor he will have an opportunity to show his ability by reconciling the serious differences between capital and labor, which are especially prevalent in Great Britain.

Lord Randolph Churchill, brilliant political leader that he was, made no secret of the fact that his career was hampered by his lack of education. He was resolved that his elder son should not be handicapped in a similar manner, and the boy was sent to Harrow at an early age. At that famous school he soon established a reputation for cleverness, but failed to become popular either with his teachers or his fellows. Even at that early age he had developed a habit of accepting nothing without discussion, and as a result he was in constant trouble with the authorities of the school. The late Duke of Argyll used to tell a story illustrative of this tendency of young Churchill to be argumentative. On a visit to Harrow, he said, he noticed a small, red-headed boy running about the cricket field all by himself, and he asked a proctor why the lad was conducting himself in that inexplicable manner.

"Oh, that's Lord Randolph Churchill's son," was the reply, "and whenever he talks too much we make him run three times round the cricket field. He's at it about half the time."

After he left Harrow the youngster was put into the hands of a famous coach, one Captain James, who prepared him for the army. Then he went through Sandhurst, the English military academy, and eventually became a subaltern in the Fourth Hussars. In this regiment his tendency to express

his opinions unasked did not meet the approval of his superior officers, and he was not a favorite at mess. His

manner was pronounced to be markedly American, and when this criticism came to his ears he took pains that the

impression should be even more distinct. As a subaltern Churchill was a



THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL.

worker and was also frankly outspoken in his opinion of those who were shirks. That did not contribute to his popularity, and no one at quarters was especially sorry when he obtained leave to go to Cuba. He reached the West Indies just at the breaking out of the Spanish-American war and at once proceeded to the front in search of adventures. Knight errant that he was, he embraced the first opportunity that presented itself to go into action. It was on the Spanish side, but he did not hesitate to turn a lance against the countrymen of his mother. That was the great mistake of his life, and he is not ashamed to confess it. He conducted himself so gallantly that he was awarded the first class medal of the Spanish order of Military Merit. It is safe to say that he never wears this decoration in the presence of his mother.

Two years later Churchill was in India engaged in the Malakand campaign. He was active as usual, was mentioned in dispatches for his good work and obtained the medal and clasp. Fortune seemed determined to make a soldier of him, for the next year he came in for more fighting and another decoration. A little later he was transferred to Egypt and was present at the battle of Khartoum, when the forces of the Mahdi were crushed finally and the Sudan was brought under British control. It was at this time that his old habit of discussing matters got him into more or less difficulty with his military superiors. He wrote letters criticizing the conduct of the leaders in Egypt, and they were published in the home papers and excited no end of comment in England.

At last the war office came to the conclusion that the two professions of soldier and newspaper correspondent were incompatible, and Churchill resigned his commission and went home to England. He didn't stop talking about affairs in Egypt, however, and there was little regret in certain quarters when the Boer war broke out and he went to South Africa with the South African Light Horse regiment. Arrived in Natal, he at once resumed his journalistic career, becoming correspondent for a London morning paper and sending home a series of letters which were very interesting reading. When the Boers captured him and carried him off to Johannesburg there was a temporary lull in the correspondence, but he escaped, made his way out of the enemy's country and appeared safe and sound in London.

Churchill's parliamentary career began in 1900. In that year he captured

Oldham, where he had failed at a previous election. Since that time he has been known as one of the most aggressive parliamentarians in the house of commons. In spite of his youth he has won much of the esteem of the peers of Chamberlain and Balfour.

It is no secret that Mr. Chamberlain would have liked to attach the brilliant young son of Lord Randolph Churchill to the Protectionist party. Mrs. Chamberlain (formerly Miss Mary Edicott) was herself an ardent supporter of votes, and when she and Churchill met at a certain function it was a fine battle of wits that followed. The lady, using feminine weapons, her antagonist to believe he was getting the better of the argument, and he, flattered by the semblance of victory, pushed forward. He fancied the moment opportune for getting at a great secret.

"Ah, Mrs. Chamberlain," he exclaimed, "it is your long association with the brightest men in parliament, and as much as your American education, that makes you so clever. Your husband could make a fellow believe the moon was made of green cheese. I suppose he has another surprise in store for us in the autumn—dissolution or something."

It was all in such an innocent, careless tone, but the lady saw the trap. Imperturbable for an instant, she raised her straight into the eyes of her tempter, and, tapping his shirt front lightly with the long feathers of her fan, answered, half-oracularly, half-prophetically, in a tone those who overheard will never forget, "Oh, you dear boy!"

One of his friends has drawn the following pen picture of Churchill at his today:

Of medium height, looking rather stouter than he is, for he is compactly built. The red hair of his boyhood has lost some of its fire and seems now rather a reddish brown than red. The eyes of light blue are large of pupil, having in them something of the free quality of the eyes of a bird. The mouth is an orator's mouth—clear cut, expressive, and not small. The forehead is broad and high, with a fairly deep vertical line above the nose; the chin, strong and well formed. His hands are a series of what may be called a sort of index to his life as well as to his general character. They are distinctly strong hands, broad in the palm, with the breadth which palmists take as showing honesty. Fingers both long and fairly thick, but tapering; the thumb slightly bent backward at the tip joint. The man with such a hand should say far.

HENRY G. PURVIS.

SELECTED BITS.

Hospitals in St. Petersburg have consented to test an electric filter invented by a Hungarian engineer. This device is of two parts, the first being so arranged that the water is submitted to a powerful electric current for destroying any germs it may contain, while the second is simply an ordinary filter of improved kind.

Burg comes the information of a new German composition to take the place of cedar in lead pencils. The principal ingredient of the substitute is potatoes. The pencils are now being manufactured and soon will be on the market. It is estimated that to manufacture these pencils will take about half of the time required to make cedar pencils.

water, together with a roll of absorbent cotton and pieces and strips of old linen for bandages, all in a convenient place to use in case of burns.

Angelo Sarto, the pope's brother, recently deceased, was for a while in the Austrian army. Then he kept a small grocery shop near Mantua, and later he had been employed in a subordinate capacity in the Italian postal service.

William Hardy Kent, regarded as the

ly passed away at Eastbourne, England, at the age of eighty-eight. Shortly after Daguerre's invention Mr. Kent learned the art of photography, and in 1848 he opened his first studio in New York. So great was his success that, after realizing a small fortune, he migrated to England in 1854 and opened three London studios.

A blind piano tuner, J. W. Lawson of Armes, Leeds, England, recently took

inland mahogany tables which he has designed and constructed have been purchased by Carmen Sylva, the gifted queen of Roumania. Her majesty takes a deep interest in people afflicted by blindness and has invited Mr. Lawson to go to Roumania to teach blind people cabinet making.

Seven years ago Richard Bell was elected member for Derby, England, in the labor interest. He is forty-seven years old, tall and rather effeminate in

appearance and bearing, suggesting rather what he really was, the snaky conductor of an express.

The father of seven or more children is practically exempt from taxation in France.

Taniamin is dissolved solely by hydrochloric acid.

Trollhattan falls are to be utilized by the Swedish government for the operation of a turbine plant.

Soft soldier deteriorates with age, and

if kept a long time in a damp atmosphere the surface corrodes and the metal will no longer flow readily.

Prof. Noel Mobius is of opinion that, although oysters over twenty years of age are rare, occasional examples attain between twenty-five and thirty years.

The annual income of all the gold hoards in Switzerland, together is about \$20,000,000. It comes to them from the most part in the copper market.