

# THE UNIQUE PERSONALITY OF HON. TOM L. JOHNSON



**T**HE Hon. Tom Loftin Johnson, whose presidential boom was recently launched in Cleveland and whose odd campaign with a circus tent and other novel accessories is attracting popular attention, is avowedly one of the most unique individuals in politics. Born in Kentucky July 18,

1854, he is only forty-eight years old, yet he has been a multimillionaire for several years past. As a boy he ran errands for a livelihood and did not despise the nickels that came in his way. To begin with, he owed his advancement to having been born frugal instead of careless of trifles. His picking up a piece of old iron and throwing it on his employer's scrap heap attracted the attention of that employer and

secured his first promotion. Before this, however, he had displayed his shrewdness by cornering the morning papers when he was a newsboy in Staunton, Va., and selling them at tremendous profits. This was his first business venture, at the age of thirteen. A boy who could conceive and carry through a newspaper combine and at the same time was regardful of trifles was just the one the street railway magnate was looking for, and he ad-

vanced his salary to \$7 per week. His strict observance of rules gave him another promotion, which came about in this way: The office had a rule that the "drawers" on the company's street cars should deposit their day's receipts in the office safe and be careful about it. They had fallen into the habit, however, of dumping the bags of money on the office floor and leaving it there to be picked up by the bookkeeper. One day Tom was drafted to be a "drawer,"

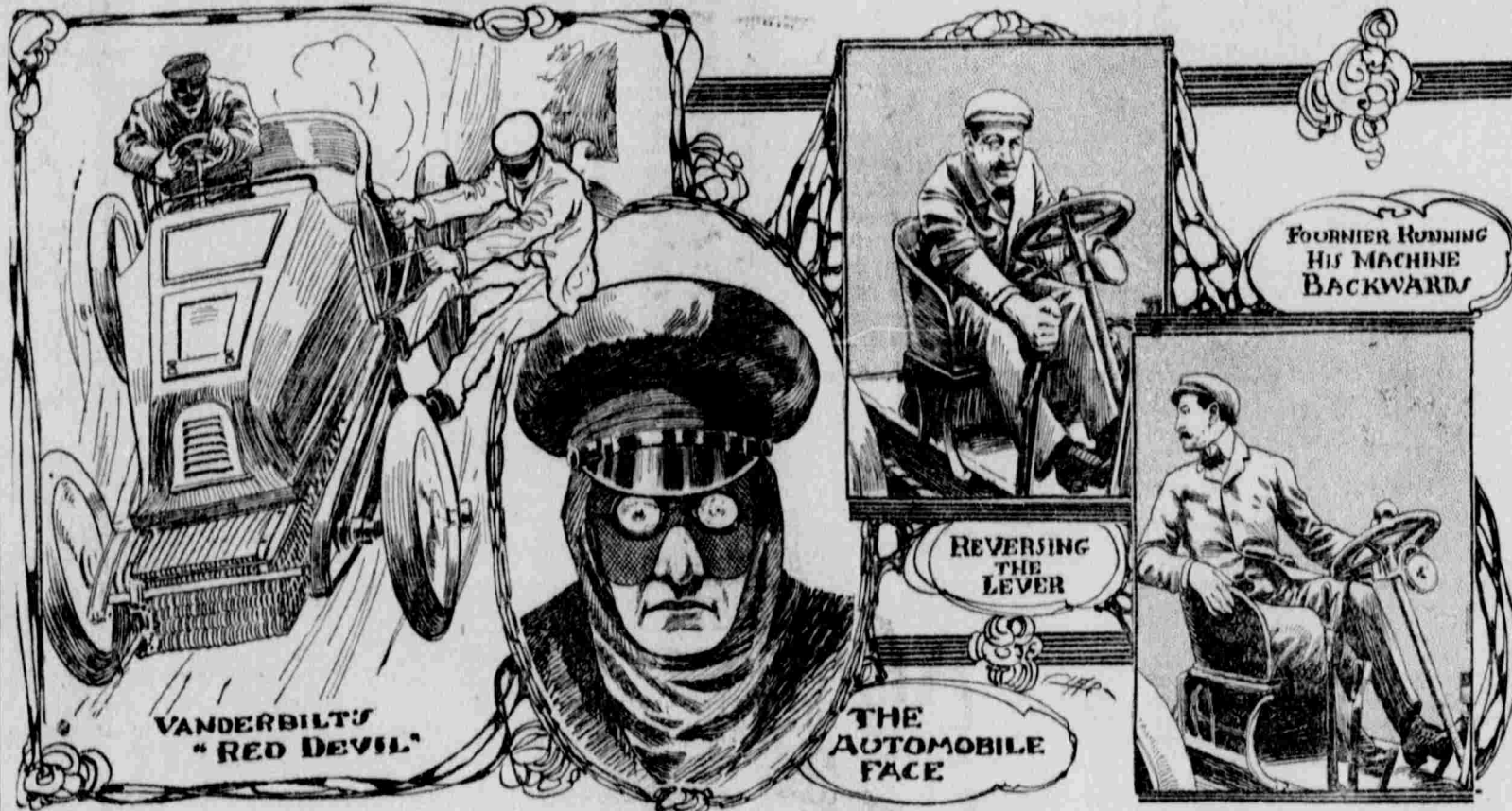
and when the bag came in with his bags of money he carefully deposited them in the safe and slammed the door. This attracted the attention of the bookkeeper, who asked him surlily what he did that for. "Dunno," answered the boy, "but the rules say 'Put the bag in the safe, and I'm going to do it whether you like it or not.'" The bookkeeper didn't like it. While the two were in the midst of an angry discussion the owner of the road walked in and inquired what the row was about. Tom told him that he was trying to live up to the rules, and his employer was so impressed that he made him chief "drawer" on the spot. Two years later, so the story runs, he was superintendent of the road. He learned all he could about street railways in general, invented a nickel in the slot machine for collecting "one horse" fares and soon found himself on the highway to success. That highway, he had the good sense to perceive, was to be traversed by trolley lines, and he stuck right to them until he had amassed a fortune. His first monopoly in a small way was newspapers, his second came through his patents on several street railway devices and his third was in the street railway business on a grand scale. Before he was twenty-two he borrowed money and picked up his first railroad in Indianapolis. He was one of the first to perceive the vast benefits to accrue from "electrifying" the one horse and one mule roads, and soon blossomed out as a full fledged capitalist. He was healthy as well as speculative and always with an eye to the main chance. When he married, he secured a rich girl with lots of money, and a beautiful one to boot. When he found that the steel mills charged him too much to manufacture the patent rail he had invented, he bought land

and erected mills of his own. He had a mania for picking up street railways and soon became known as the trolley king, controlling lines in Indianapolis, Springfield, Ill., New Orleans, St. Louis, Brooklyn, Columbus and Cleveland and in other places "too numerous to mention." He bought them for little, put mortgages on them as heavy as could be floated and issued stocks and bonds, which the people who believed in him gladly and freely bought. Incidentally, he made many other fortunes besides his own, and his own is now estimated at \$15,000,000 or \$20,000,000. But at last this money getter of unsurpassed abilities saw "a great light." It was many years ago that he first read a copy of Henry George's noted book, "Progress and Poverty," and he became a single taxer from the moment that he met the author. He was then a monopolist of the strictest sort, owning valuable franchises obtained from the public for next to nothing, yet he turned about and became—in theory at least—a pronounced enemy to all privileges of whatever sort granted by the people and fostered by government local or national. It was on New Year's day, 1899, that he announced, "I have withdrawn from all my business enterprises in order to devote my time, my fortune—in fact, my life—to the promulgation of the (Henry George) single tax idea." This change of front and the mixed ideas he has put forth in politics have caused many to call him the "political paradox," the "modern Moses," "Tom Tolstoj Johnson" and a variety of names, complimentary and otherwise. But Tom Johnson does not care what people call him. People were astounded when this organizer of railway monopolies and steel rail trusts offered himself for congress as a free trader and opponent of monopolies, but he won an election in a

strongly protective district and served as representative during three terms, from 1891 to 1893. His greatest feat while there was the securing of the entire body of Henry George's book in the Congressional Record and securing it a circulation of more than a million copies, delivering it conjointly with five other members as "speeches in the house." The fight he made for the majority of Cleveland and his election to the office on the 1st of April, 1901, are still fresh in memory. The spectacle of a "five-cent millionaire" championing the cause of three-cent fares on street railways and eventual ownership of the people's franchises by the people themselves attracted the attention of the whole country. In personal appearance Mr. Johnson is short and sturdy and weighs about 250 pounds. He has a big "bull" neck, a round, smooth shaven face, strong square jaws and a jovial, youthful look. His figure is corpulent, but his shoulders are broad and capable of carrying all that can be placed upon them. In dress he is simple, and his manners are the same. He moves in the highest society, but mingles freely with all classes, particularly championing the "down-trodden and oppressed." His energy is unmistakable, and his mental acuteness is shown by his "tackling" a French jesson daily and keeping it up for two years in order to master a language he wished to understand. A strong fighter and a hard hitter, Tom Johnson is always good natured withal, and as mayor of Cleveland he elbows aside the vast throngs of office seekers as jovially as erstwhile he combated his opponents in congress. He has always been cheery of manner and polite to all, so the people like him whether they endorse his peculiar views and political ambitions or not. JAMES L. AFFLING.

# WHY THERE ARE SO MANY AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS

**T**HE increasing frequency of automobile accidents and their terrible fatalities have attracted universal attention, and many plans are being discussed for their prevention in the future. It is a significant fact that more accidents have occurred this year than in any year previous, due doubtless to the increasing use of the machines as well as to the mania for racing which seems to have possessed many auto owners and hurried several of them to untimely deaths. It was on the 14th of last August that Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Fair were killed by the wrecking of their automobile while touring in France and only twelve days later that Mr. F. J. Matthews and a lady companion were killed by a similar accident in New Jersey. In both instances the machines were going at a high rate of speed, and the accidents could have been prevented by the use of ordinary precautions; but the mishap of Sir Thomas Lipton's auto a little later was one that even the most experienced of chauffeurs could not have prevented. Sir Thomas' machine "skidded," and the ever smiling baronet was considerably shaken up in consequence. The persistence with which these automobile accidents have occurred shows that there is something radically wrong, both with the machines and in the manner of using them. The French have come to the conclusion that the manufacturers of automobiles must use greater care in their construction. They have, of course, accepted such orders as were sent to their shops, and the most of those orders having been



for racing machines, or at least for autos that will make and maintain a high rate of speed, naturally enough they have been actively engaged not only as the White Ghost, the Red Devil and others of their type, some of which

have records up to sixty miles an hour and are fearful engines of death when on a rampage. Most of these machines are propelled by steam, especially the largest, but the machine in which Fournier made

his record of a mile in 51 4-5 seconds was driven by gasoline, as also was that used by W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., who has the wonderful record to his credit of a mile in 48 2-5 seconds. The latter has recently sworn off

auto racing, having been influenced in that determination through the tragic death of his brother-in-law, Mr. Fair, and his wife, though "blaming it" on the defective roads and lax road laws of the country. And yet Mr. Vander-

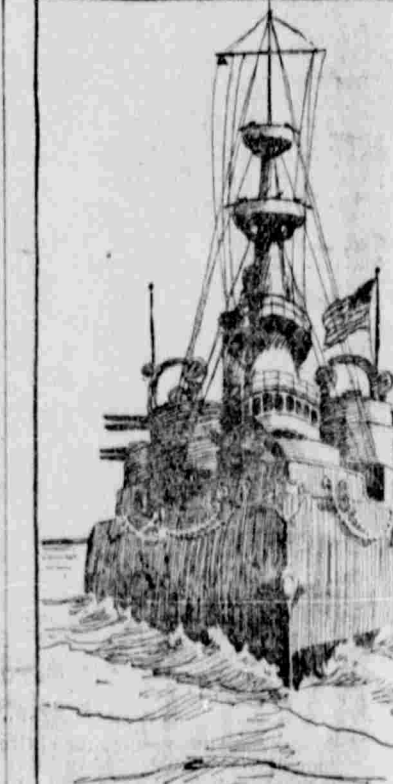
bilt has been arrested since he announced his renunciation, for speeding in the streets of Newport! In the development of the automobile machines have been evoked many tons in weight and capable of speeding up to seventy miles an hour, but experience has shown that the relatively lighter autos are the best, all things considered, and also the most durable. The Automobile Club of France has placed a ban upon all machines weighing more than 900 kilos (about 1,900 pounds), and this edict, together with the popular outburst against driving those huge machines so recklessly over the country roads, has created a revision there in favor of lighter and slower machines. No doubt exists as to what popular sentiment is respecting the speeding of autos in our streets and highways, as shown in the passing of state laws generally regulating the speed to less than eight or ten miles an hour. But it is one thing to get a law enacted and quite another to enforce it. A strict enforcement of the laws, with the substitution of imprisonment for a fine (which the millionaire drivers of automobiles only laugh at), will reduce the number of casualties on our highways, while it should also be "further enacted" that every chauffeur must be provided with a license setting forth his qualifications as an engineer. First of all, says the eminent Fournier (who has himself been in many an accident, by the way), a chauffeur should be a good steersman and have not only his hands, but his feet, under full control. His eyes must be fixed on the road in front unless reversing, when they must be over his shoulder. He must have confidence, but not be overconfident, a fault that has caused

many a disaster. It would seem from the reports of various accidents that the greatest danger to an operator, whether experienced or not, is from skidding, when the steering gear refuses to act properly and the machine persists in waiting, first on its fore wheels, then on its hind, particularly when the road is wet and slippery. A burst tire will cause the worst sort of skidding, the experts say, and to this kind of accident they at first ascribed the terrible happening in France last month, though the latest reports make it due to a defective steering wheel. Pneumatic tires have a less firm hold upon the road the broader they are, and the manufacturers must work to the end of securing tires with narrower bearing as well as to produce a steering gear that will act more quickly and effectively and not break. As at present arranged, the chauffeur is sometimes completely at the mercy of his machine no matter how experienced he may be. An auto is a swift motor having no rails to hold it to its true course. For the prevention of accidents in the future, at least for minimizing their results, there should be perfect co-operation on the part of manufacturers, auto users and owners and the general public. The first named must strive to produce a more nearly perfect machine, one that can be brought under control no matter what the condition of roads or weather. The time has gone by for ignoring the automobile, as it has become a factor in motor problems that is destined to supersede the horse; so the only thing now is to accept it, but to hedge its use about with precautions, as in laws restricting speed and severe penalties for their infraction. EDWARD M. SEPHTON.

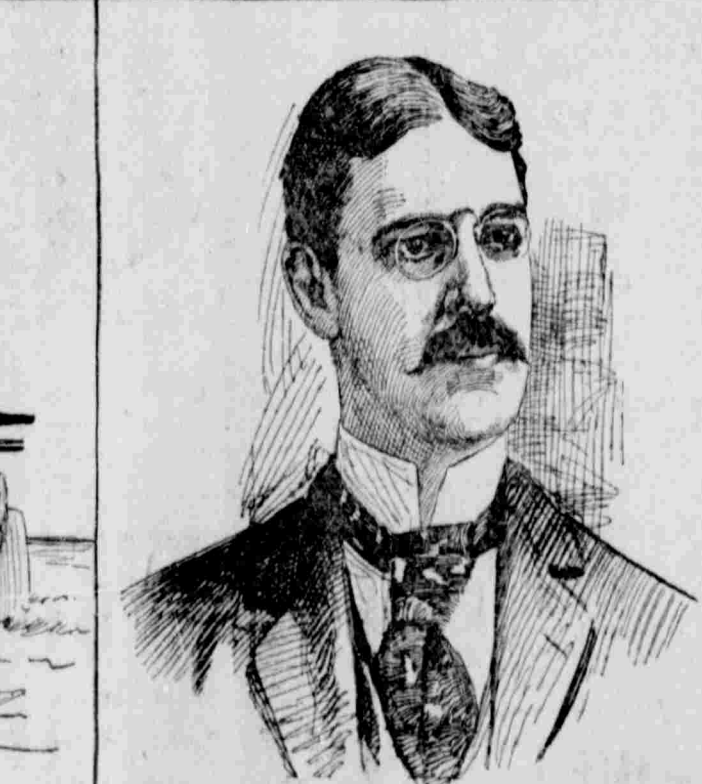
# LEWIS NIXON AND THE NEW SHIP BUILDING COMBINE

**T**HAT shipbuilding is on the increase in the United States and that the future holds boundless possibilities in store for our naval and merchant marine are patent to everybody. The latest of the great combines, by which seven large and flourishing shipbuilding concerns were united under one management a few months ago and which already has orders ahead, it is said, to the extent of \$10,000,000, is the United States Shipbuilding company of New Jersey. Now that the head of this shipbuilding company, Lewis Nixon, has announced the intention not only of building all kinds of craft, but of constructing, if possible, a mammoth drydock to be located somewhere in New York harbor, the enterprise assumes a really national character. This character, in fact, it had already proclaimed when it took into the company such widely separated concerns as the Union Iron works of San Francisco, the Crescent shipyards of Elizabeth, N. J., the Bath Iron Works and Windlass company of Bath, Me.; the Eastern Shipbuilding company of New London, Conn.; the Herjan and Hollingsworth company of Wilmington, Del.; the Canda Manufacturing company of Carteret, N. J., and the Bethlehem Steel company of Pennsylvania. The capitalization of the combine has been increased from \$20,000,000, as originally announced, to \$45,000,000, and the company has issued \$15,000,000 of 5 percent first mortgage bonds. Although the combine was formed some time ago, the consummation only came about within a few weeks, when its chief promoter, Lewis Nixon, retired from the presidency of the Crescent shipyards, one of the constituent companies, to assume the directorate of the larger corporation. While the brain that con-

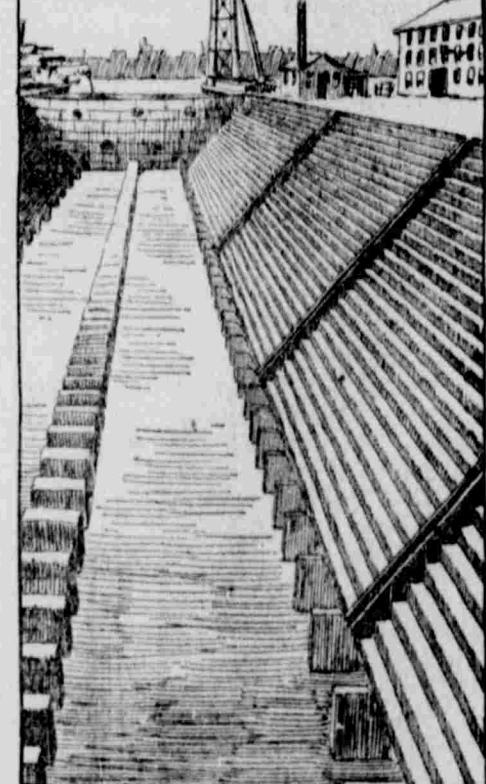
ceived and perfected the scheme of consolidation was doubtless that of J. Pierpont Morgan, who thus welded another link in the chain with which he is girdling the globe, the man who has appeared most prominently in it is Mr. Nixon. Born in 1861 at Leesburg, Va., where his father was keeper of the county jail, Lewis Nixon early displayed the force and energy for which he has since become conspicuous. Sent to the Naval academy at Annapolis, he graduated at the head of his class and was ordered by the navy department to England, where he took a special course in naval architecture at the Royal college, Greenwich. On his return to the United States he was appointed assistant naval constructor at Washington. He designed the battleship Oregon, later resigning from the navy and entering the works of Cramp & Sons at Philadelphia to superintend the construction of several large warships. In 1895 he purchased the Crescent shipyards at Elizabeth, N. J., since which time he has been actively engaged not only as a shipbuilder, but as a Tammany politician who acquired a following by his energetic qualities. However much the new combine may contribute to the bringing about of this desired condition of affairs, when America shall become mistress of the world's marine construction, there is one feature of the scheme which appeals especially to national pride, and that is the building of a great drydock which shall be large enough to accommodate the biggest vessel now afloat on either the Atlantic or Pacific coast. So far as the vessels of our navy go, there are several floating docks which can take in the biggest battleship in the service. In pursuance of the plans recently adopted by congress, appropriations have been made for a chain of docks along the Atlantic coast from Portsmouth, N. H., to the gulf of Mex-



THE OREGON.



LEWIS NIXON.



A MAMMOTH DRY DOCK.

ico and also on the Pacific from San Diego to Seattle. Immense masonry docks are to be constructed at the New York and Norfolk navy yards capable of receiving the heaviest warships and carrying a depth of thirty feet of water. Recognizing the necessity of keeping pace with the vast increase in size and armament of the modern battleships, the navy department has prepared its plans well in advance, and we are no

longer open to the reproach of being unable to dock warships of our own construction in our own yards. The most important factor in the shipbuilding combine is probably the Bethlehem Steel company, which itself has a capital of \$15,000,000 and had issued bonds to the amount of nearly \$9,000,000 more. Thus the great shipbuilding concern becomes absolutely unique in the position it occupies, con-

trolling as it does all the essential material for building torpedo boats, destroyers, battleships and ocean liners, and also plants for the manufacture of armor plate, guns, large and small, and forgings of every kind. "With this acquisition," says a member of the combine, "the United States Shipbuilding company will be by far the most completely equipped plant of its kind in the world, manufacturing everything itself,

including its armor plate and guns. This combination, with the enormous facilities behind it, its strong financial backing and the management it will have, is destined to put this country again in the position which she once held as the leading shipbuilding nation in the world." While all the constituent companies of the combine are interesting, illustrating as they do the enormous develop-

ment of a vast industry of the country, space permits mention of but two, typical, however, of them all. These two stand with a continent between them, geographically speaking—the Bath Iron works and the Union Iron works of San Francisco. The history of American shipbuilding is written in the creations of the Bath builders, who have to their credit the fast clipper ships of olden times as well as the speediest steamers of the more modern period. Adapting their yards for the building of wooden ships to the requirements of the "steel age," the Bath builders soon turned out marine architecture second to none. The Bath Iron works were founded by General T. W. Hyde in 1857 and in 1859 contracted to build their first gunboats for the United States navy, following with merchant vessels of enormous tonnage and speed for their speed. The yards are regarded as models of their kind and capable of immense development. While the Union Iron works of San Francisco are now ranked among the largest and most nearly perfect in the world, they have been established within twenty years. Their first contract for building a United States war vessel was that for the Charleston in 1856, the famous Oregon being their first battleship, the keel of which was laid in 1871, seven years before she made her renowned voyage from San Francisco to Santiago de Cuba. They have also built the Ohio, the San Francisco, Wyoming, Tacoma, Olympia, immense merchant steamers, etc., their work ranking with the world's best. Among the forces now operating to place the Pacific coast states among the foremost in the race for supremacy in our mercantile marine none outranks the great shipbuilding industry known as the Union Iron works, which is now a member of the great combine. ALFRED Q. EDWARDS.

## READ AND BE WISE.

Scottish miners have declared themselves in favor of abolishing Saturday work. Satisfactory experiments with fuel oil for fire engines have been made in London. Percival Lowell has lately given an abstract of his unpublished paper on the capture of comets by Jupiter. It

discusses the action of Jupiter upon a comet entering the planet's sphere of activity and the relation borne by the direction and velocity of its approach to the comet's subsequent behavior. It appears that Jupiter is not only capable of transforming at one encounter a parabolic orbit into an elliptic one, but can actually cause a comet to make

the planet instead of the sun the goal of its visit and send it back into space without circumnavigating the sun at all. In shortening the Union Pacific railroad between Omaha and Ogden by thirty miles, reducing the grades from a maximum of ninety-seven to a maximum of forty-three feet and expanding the curves, \$15,000,000 will be expended, it is said, when the work is

finished. There will be a great saving in fuel, in the use of much longer freight trains, and the resulting increase of earnings has been estimated at \$3,000,000 a year. The London school board has opened a school for cripples in Whitechapel, London. A number of Viennese women have started a dress reform league with the object of suppressing the corset and

introducing a new kind of divided skirt. Lord Kitchener says that most of the trouble with the mounts in South Africa was due to the fact that soldiers attending to them knew nothing of the care of horses. One of the favorite drinks in St. Pierre was rum mixed with cocoanut milk in the shell. Up to the present slower progress is being made with the construction of the

Edward VII. than of any warship built at Devonport. Governor Wood brought home with him from Cuba as a souvenir a handsome machete presented to him by veterans of the Cuban war. Lord Roberts has ordered tests to be made of Sir Robert Ross' rifle, which is being manufactured at Ottawa for the Canadian government. Of ninety boy criminals confined in

the Kansas City jail in a period of six months all but two were victims of the cigarette habit. In Turkey red hair is counted a great beauty. This is the famous turkey red. Authority says never a word about the accompanying white horses. The Kagura taiko is a large drum used in Japanese temples. Thus far the United States has built 80 schools in Porto Rico.