

about hard times ought to pray that one of its consequences may be the restoration of hard sense to those who during some years past have been chasing baubles and imagining vain things. Thrift, thrift, Horatio, is what the Utopians need a little brushing up in. We earnestly advise those who have orchards, or who have land on which it is possible to plant orchards, to take a leaf out of friend Warner's book. It wouldn't need many trees producing such magnificent fruit as he sends, to keep a whole family in comfort the year round, besides providing a little surplus cash now and then to put in the savings bank.

A YEAR OF JUBILEE.

Various plans are now being formed for the celebration of the year of 1900, the last of the present century. One proposition, made by the editor of the *Christian Statesman*, is to make it a year of jubilee in every country where the name of our Lord is known. The idea is to celebrate it as the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the birth of Christ, by a number of conventions extending through the whole year and so arranged that tourists can attend the whole series if they feel so disposed.

It would be a good idea, in connection with this proposed celebration, to reconsider the whole question of the true commencement of the Christian era. With the various resources now at hand, astronomical, archæological and historical, it might be hoped that strictly scientific researches would lead to something definite, or nearly so, in regard to this matter. The method of dating events from the birth of Christ was introduced, we are told, in the middle of the sixth century by the Roman abbot Dionysius Exiguus. Previous to his time Christian writers had dated from various events in the life of the Founder of our faith. To mark the year of the birth as the first of the epoch would seem most natural. But unfortunately when the idea first occurred to Dionysius the year and the date were forgotten, and according to the records he had, after a laborious computation he held that the nativity took place in the 753rd year after the foundation of Rome. Later investigators have tried to show that he probably placed it at least four years too late, which would make the present year the eighteen hundred and ninety-seventh of our era.

The question of in what month or on what day the nativity occurred may be of less importance for chronological purposes. Writers on the subject disagree, placing it in nearly every month of the year. One thing seems quite certain, however. It did not take place in December, as the common practice of celebrating Christmas in that month would imply. The announcement of the advent was made during a season when the shepherds, instead of leading their flocks to the fold during the night as they invariably do in Palestine during the rainy season, were watching them grazing in the fields surrounding Bethlehem. This would indicate that the great event occurred rather in the spring than in midwinter.

As has just been said, the present

time would seem to be appropriate to give the whole subject a most thorough investigation. The result, would be of interest to the whole Christian world.

ANNEXATION'S FUTURE IS PAST.

The eastern papers seemed for a time to have generally come to the conclusion that the union of Utah and Nevada would be a satisfactory settlement of what they are disposed to consider two vexing questions. Once in a while, however, the correspondents from Washington pointed out the absurdities of the proposition, and punctured the pretensions of those who by favoring the scheme think to give evidence of statesmanship. Latterly editorial opinion on the subject is also undergoing a change. When people take the time to look at the matter calmly they soon see how many difficulties are in the way.

As long ago as the 11th inst. the *New York World* was telegraphically informed by its Washington man that there was little prospect of the annexation scheme going through. Delegate Rawlins of this Territory is quoted as putting the case in the following pungent and unanswerable fashion:

Such a bill could never pass Congress for various reasons. In the first place the people of both the State and the Territory are opposed to it, and my people especially are against it. Such a consolidation could not be made without the consent of the people of Nevada, and they would never give their consent. It would make a state 1,000 miles wide, and the only communication from one side to the other would be across a desert hundreds of miles wide.

THE RAILROADS.

It is noted that the reports of the 1st Interstate Commerce commission have a habit of appearing at times when the measure of their usefulness is largely spent, and while this is complained of in the East we of the West have more ground for complaint. They have more roads of all kinds than we and in addition have numerous waterways which we have not, so that railway communication is a subject that "touches us very near" indeed. The fifth annual report of the commission was recently issued, and as it is for the year ended June 30, 1892, and thus sixteen months behind time, the force of the first remark above made will be more readily appreciated.

It is shown thereby that although a prosperous year there was a great falling off in construction, only 3160 miles having been built. The figures for the present year must, therefore, show an extraordinary decrease. It would seem that the railway needs of the country are far from being supplied, although in many sections, particularly in the sparsely populated regions of the far West, there has been a great waste in the needless building of many parallel lines by competing companies. "While the investing public is very much of a fool part of the time, it is not a fool all the time, for, sooner or later, experience must teach it something." And it begins to look as if this great falling off in construction were chiefly due to

the fact that investors have very largely awakened to a consciousness of the character of the methods employed to secure cash for the various issues of stock and bonds that form a preliminary to railway building. We are shown that the millions that have proven an absolute loss to railway investors would fill a very large hole. The proportion of dividend to non-dividend paying securities makes an eloquent comment upon this fact. Upon nearly \$3,000,000,000 of stock, or 60.80 per cent of the whole, no dividends were paid and this raises the interesting question as to how much stock, that which pays dividends and the other kind, represents "water."

The *Boston Herald* properly voices the situation when it says that while the railway development of the United States has been something magnificent, and largely underlies the growth of this country, when we consider it from the point of view of the capital engaged in the work, the railways themselves, taken in the lump, do not form a monument to business sagacity. Another thing to be considered is the fact that during the year one person out of 322 among railway employees was killed and one in seventy-nine was injured by accidents, emphasizing the need of national laws requiring the adoption of all possible safety appliances.

ACTORS AND ACTING.

Richard Henry Stoddard recently wrote an article on the drama of the day in which he says "if a poet in our day wrote a play in dramatic blank verse it would fail, because modern players are not intelligent enough to read blank verse correctly. Edwin Booth was the last of the great players and there are no more intellectual audiences." With these conclusions the *New York World* distinctly and emphatically differs, and the latter is as much an authority on dramatic affairs as the gifted critic and poet himself. That paper thinks it is "a mark of senility to believe that when your favorite actor dies acting must of necessity stop. Plays are still occasionally written in blank verse, and here and there audiences have intelligence enough to estimate them at their true worth."

This is doubtless true. Audiences are to some extent at least what actors make them and vice versa. They are in constant communion and sympathy, neither progressing very far above or beyond the other as a rule. Our cotemporary does not rest its case there, however. It goes on to show that Edwin Booth was not the last of the great players any more than he was the first. "The glory and merit of the historic drama do not center in an individual, and never have. Men come and go, but the drama stays and grows apace coincidentally with the growth of intelligence and the widening reach of knowledge all about it."

The concluding portion affirms our own conclusion substantially, and we are ready to concur with the other, that Edwin Booth was not the last of the great actors. As the *News* looks at the subject—and a host of playgoers, playreaders;