

losses to render the demands of the strikers a small matter. The damage is not only to be calculated in the value of the cars, freight, warehouses and lives destroyed, but in the reputation of the road. Of course the railway authorities charge their troubles to criminal interference with their rolling stock on the part of the strikers. The latter, with much reason, assert that it is the natural result of employing incompetent men. In any case, this seems a very strange time for a strike. One would suppose that while laborers are positively starving to death all over the country, having nothing to do and no provision for an idle period, men who have occupations would be glad to hold them, even at pinching wages. These are times when very few enterprises can pay their stockholders anything, and the rule is for the stockholder to go down on his private bank to tide the business over and save it from going to pieces. But there is, at the same time, a tremendous amount of greed in the business world. Enterprises that, in spite of the hard times, are making their owners rich, are nevertheless frequently manipulated so as to turn the hard times to good account for the concern. The laborer is subjected to heavy reductions in wages, not because his toil does not return good money to the employer, but because there is no hope for another job should he leave the one he has. And so he is squeezed another turn. In case he is already down to the bed rock, as many laborers were before the hard times came, the squeezing process results too often in desperation. In such a case general depression is not likely to cut any figure.

We have felt for years that serious trouble would surely come to this country through the labor question unless something were done to check the monstrous inequalities that are springing up between citizens on the score of gain. The tendency is to reduce to absolute slavery men of all types of intellect who have not made the tricks of fortune their dependence for a living. There are grades of men who can be converted into bondmen, but the majority of the American blood will not submit to it peaceably. And just before the point is to be reached whereat the country and its people are to be turned over to the private estates of the lucky gamblers, there is going to be trouble. The safety of the Republic depends therefore upon the dexterity with which our statesmen keep that ominous proceeding in the misty future.

#### AN ENGAGEMENT AWAITED.

If the two sides in the Brazilian controversy are really determined to fight, and nothing but fighting will satisfy them, why then, in the interest of news and of science let them go at it quickly, make a complete job of it, and get through without any unnecessary delay or palaver. The rebel admiral on his part seems to be willing to meet the government's navy halfway in pursuance of this program; he is keen to get out on the high seas and

engage the vessels understood to be heading for the harbor of Rio. How severely his own ships may have been injured in their efforts to run the gauntlet of the shore forts and batteries can only be surmised; but if he has escaped without material loss, and shall really come to a passage at arms with the newly-purchased American vessel, the *Nichteroy*, there ought to be a battle royal with much useful information for the promoters and participants of future naval warfare.

The questions to be settled by the conflict, in this view of the case, are interesting. Foremost among them is as to the efficiency of the pneumatic dynamite gun—the Zaluski invention—and which has never yet been employed in a fight. It is supposed to be of immense destructive power to an opponent, but there is also a lingering fear that the element of danger is not confined to the enemy alone. Whether the new monster may not prove unmanageable, and whether the carrying of its fearful ammunition is not at the risk of complete annihilation—these are questions that, from the other standpoint, excite interest. Then the conflict will be expected to solve much dispute as to the efficiency of an iron-clad as compared with a wooden ship. The *Nichteroy* is one of the latter class, the *Aquidaban*, Admiral Mello's vessel, is armored. Furthermore, their maneuvering and fighting will not merely result in showing which style of torpedo is the better for purposes of slaughter, and which class of ship can better give and receive punishment, but also which can run away the more cleverly and dodge about—"fire and fall back"—to the bewilderment, dismay and eventual defeat of the other.

On all these matters the forthcoming trial of conclusions ought to throw considerable light. No further explanation is needed of the impatience with which news from Brazil is awaited, and of the avidity with which each succeeding rumor from the seat of war is perused, commented upon and swallowed.

#### PEOPLE WITH PECULIARITIES.

A great many persons, especially among the fair sex, have a strong inclination toward peculiarities in their wearing apparel. With some this inclination leads to efforts at dress reform which in many cases would be a marked improvement on prevailing fashions. In other instances the change sought seems to have little to commend it. The latest attempt at a remarkably peculiar nature of costuming, or rather non-costuming, freak is that of Mrs. Aber, recorded in the NEWS a few days since. It is said the lady is a resident of Salt Lake; if so, her residence here has been of brief duration. Her efforts in the line of dress reform were made at Coronado Beach, California, where the atmosphere at the present season of the year is less wintry than in this altitude, and therefore more suitable to going barefoot. The lady is no doubt inspired by a worthy motive in her peculiarity, and she certainly has rea-

son to feel flattered at the glowing description given in the coast papers of her attractive appearance "in white gown and bare pink toes." The fact that the necessity of poverty did not require her to dispense with footwear doubtless had its influence on the gushing writers. For such an order of dress when associated with habiliments of rags which usually accompany the necessity of going barefoot in the crowded cities of civilized countries is far from being attractive.

There is in Tennessee a young lady who also seems very desirous of changing the manner of her attire. She doesn't seek, as some loving wives do, to wear the trousers figuratively, but to do so in fact. She was incited to this desire by the offer of free clothing for a year. A tailor in Chattanooga, Mr. Wildman, read of an actress who was permitted by the authorities of San Jose, Cal., to wear men's clothing on the streets this summer, and he announced that if any lady in Tennessee would get permission to wear men's attire she would be furnished by his firm with clothing for a year. The next day a well dressed woman called and learning the conditions started to secure the required permission. The police department referred her to the mayor who stood by the tailoring establishment to the extent of withholding from the lady permission to wear masculine bifurcated garments.

An unusual peculiarity is, however, reported from Maine. It is a man that wears petticoats and is at the same time esteemed in his community as a person of integrity and intelligence. He is Commander James Robbins, of the local post G. A. R., Cooper's Mills, Lincoln county, Maine. He is a prominent man of the town, and when he goes down street for the mail and to do his marketing he slips on his masculine pantaloons. This fact is probably what protects him from being publicly characterized as a crank. But when he goes out he always wears a woman's No. 8 shoe, with high heels and graceful, slender shape. He is about 180 pounds in weight, and the effect produced by those shoes peeping coyly out from beneath manly trouser legs is said to be startling, at least to the inexperienced observer. The gentleman does not mince or toddle, and his shoes seem to fit him pretty well.

Mr. Robbins reserves his petticoats for the sanctity of the home circle, his siesta in the garden or visits to intimate friends. He says he enjoys wearing them, and does so scientifically. Every detail of feminine attire is there, and Mr. Robbins is as fussy about their arrangement as a lady can be. In fact it is said there is no woman in Cooper's Mills who owns so many dresses of such excellent material as does the commander of the G. A. R. post there.

There is no question that certain modifications in attire, particularly in the line that some fashions impose upon the gentler sex, would greatly add to the health, comfort and convenience of those who wear it, and such modification should be met by warm commendation until a garb at once comfortable and attractive is secured. But the efforts at radical changes as in the instances cited, instead of aiding dress reform are really its greatest enemies, because they re-