

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

The False Prophet has won a place in history.

As a result of the low price of wheat, the acreage of winter wheat this year is far below that of 1881.

The English in the Sudan have been brought to a realization of the fact that El Mahdi is no spring chicken.

O'Donovan Rossa should hereafter pay heed to the admonition of Weller to Sammy, and beware of the wid-ers.

One of the questions to be discussed by the dynamite congress at Paris is whether the Fenians shall unite with the dynamiters.

General Gordon left Cairo for Khartoum on January 26, 1884, just one year to a day before he was betrayed and stabbed to death in the latter city.

During 1881 the surface and elevated railroads of New York City transported 803,183,862 passengers, or nearly six times the population of the entire country.

A bill has been introduced in the New York Legislature to make it a felony to send flowers or tokens of sympathy to a convicted murderer or felon in prison.

A Fenian, N. Y. man, has lost 198 pounds during an illness of 107 days, having been reduced from a weight of 365 pounds. Sickness is, after all, the best anti-fat yet discovered.

Emperor Alexander of Russia, has purchased the great Basilewski collection of paintings. While moving it from Paris to St. Petersburg he insured the collection in the sum of \$1,300,000, in eighteen different companies.

The formation of a cremation society at Buffalo, whose members include more than fifty leading physicians, business men and society people, is another sign of the growing feeling in favor of the system.

The tons of General Wolsley's dispatches to the home Government is not reassuring. They have the appearance of a consciousness of being in a very tight place, and of a desire to avoid the responsibility of further disaster on the Ministry.

If the day is not cloudy on August 12, 1899, England may view a total eclipse of the sun, the only total eclipse in the next 200 years. There is time enough for our people to purchase tickets for the show.

There comes from San Francisco a curious report that the Mormons are forming an alliance offensive and defensive with an Indian tribe in Sonora, on the lower part of the Gulf of California, numbering 40,000, and that an expedition may shortly be expected from Utah to that point.

MUFTACHES on clergyman's faces are condemned by the Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Gridley. To give potency to the voice of the pulpit, the lips should be uncovered. If the ox that treadeth out the corn should not be muzzled, he submits that the mouth should enjoy equal freedom in the preacher.

Divorces are becoming fashionable in Scotland. Last year eighty-nine petitions were granted, being the largest number on record. The highest number of divorces in any previous year was eighty-one in 1880. The average number for the ten years before 1876 was only thirty-five.

The roller-skating craze has taken on such unwholesome concomitants in Harrisburg, Pa., that it is made the subject of a presentation by the grand jury, in which the alleged sport is denounced as detrimental to the health and morals of the attendants at the rink.

The funds left by the late Governor C. C. Washburn, of Minnesota, for the liberal endowment of an Orphan Asylum in Minneapolis have, after a long litigation, been placed in the hands of the trustees, who propose to proceed at once to the erection of a building.

DURING the past summer an attempt has been made to build a bridge over the Jordan at Jericho. It has progressed slowly, however, as the lumber furnished had to be brought from Europe and carried on the backs of camels from the port of Jaffa to the river.

It appears that Mrs. Dudley was known as "Lucille" when she left England. If she escapes punishment for shooting at Rossa five times and only hitting him once, a severe penalty should be inflicted upon her for trying to impose her middle name, "Yessit," on an innocent community.

The origin of the present war in Egypt dates from February 20, 1879—six years ago. The aspect of the question has changed repeatedly since then, but it has never been settled.

A CORRESPONDENT of the London Times, commenting on the English ship-building interests, mentions the fact that many ships built in England and sent to all parts of the world never return to home waters unless to bring more grief to the British mill in the shape of repairs. Among these are vessels that ply between India and the United States, and those employed in carrying fruits from the West Indies to New York, and ports in other foreign countries.

CRIMINAL CARELESSNESS.

Horrible Repetition of the Kankakee Fire at a Philadelphia Alms-House.

Philadelphia, February 12.—At least thirteen, probably fourteen, lives were lost by fire tonight through the criminal carelessness of the management of the Blockley Alms-house, on the west side of the Schuylkill River, in this city. The house properly covers a large tract of ground, and has for years been in such a condition as to threaten to burn down at any moment.

At 8:15 o'clock, the first alarm was given from the insane department. On the main side there were ninety-one men and a large number of women, when the flames were discovered. The firemen responded promptly to the call, but the alarm was so late that it was impossible to prevent the fire from spreading.

The fire started in the kitchen, where a woman was cooking. The flames spread rapidly, and in a few minutes the entire building was in flames. The firemen arrived in a few minutes, but the damage was done.

The fire was extinguished in about an hour, but the damage was extensive. The building was a large brick structure, and the fire had spread to the roof. The firemen were unable to save the building, and it was completely destroyed.

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EARLE'S LAST CHARGE.

Three Other Officers and a Number of Men Killed.

LONDON, February 12.—The Standard's correspondent with General Earle's column sends the following dispatch, dated Dulke Island, Tuesday, 11th inst. The British troops were ordered to attack the enemy, who held a strong position on the hills near Birt.

After some fighting the enemy were completely surrounded. Finding it impossible to dislodge the rebels from their fortified position, General Earle ordered the troops to charge. General Earle was killed while leading the attack. The British Watch Regiment captured the position at the point of the bayonet, the cavalry taking possession of the enemy's camp.

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THE ALMSHOUSE HORROR.

Entire Portion Set Apart for the Insane Destroyed.

Twenty-Eight Now Thought to be the Number Who Perished, but Many More are Missing.

PHILADELPHIA, February 12.—The fire of last night at the Alms-house entirely destroyed that portion of the institution set apart for the insane. The flames confined there are many missing, but it is thought most of them wandered away. At 10 o'clock this morning less than twenty bodies were found in Ward No. 2. They had been found beyond all recognition. Several human forms can be seen in the burning wreck in the cellar.

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STATE NEWS ITEMS.

Legislative Proceedings.

COLEBURN, February 12.—The following bills were passed in the Senate: Fixing the Height of a Babel of corn in the State; Right of appeal from the Commission to assess the Board of the Public Quarantine; Hamilton County, requiring insurance companies to provide for the organization of a county-wide commission, including the Board of Health, to be organized in this State; to deposit with the superintendent of insurance a certain amount of money to be used in the event of a fire in the State; to provide for the organization of a county-wide commission, including the Board of Health, to be organized in this State; to deposit with the superintendent of insurance a certain amount of money to be used in the event of a fire in the State.

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A MODEL GRAND JURY.

Criminal Practices in Arkansas in Early Days.

A history of the criminal practice of Arkansas would not only be a volume of bloody tragedy but would contribute largely to humorous literature. Years ago, when Colonel W. P. Grace was prosecuting attorney of a southern circuit, he was determined, in view of the inexorable leniency which prevailed, to effect a reform by enforcing on the minds of grand jurors the necessity of punishing criminals. On one occasion when court met at Arkansas Post, the Colonel was particularly desirous of making a good record. The grand jury, described as an "onery lookin' set o' fellers," occupied a negro cabin, near the court house.

"Now, gentlemen," said Colonel Grace, "expediency demands that you should organize and get to work just as soon as possible." A man named Jacquins was elected foreman. "Now," said the Colonel, "who will set as clerk? Won't you?" addressing the most intelligent looking member.

"Kain't read nor write," replied the man.

"Well, won't you?" addressing another.

"Would it wa'n't for one thing."

"What's that?"

"I ken read, but I kain't write worth a cuss. Wash I could, but I kain't."

"I am certain you will," addressing an old fellow.

"No, I kere not to-day. I kain't set nuffin' nohow."

"Oh, go on an' save, Uncle Caleb," said the man who could not write worth a cuss. "Go on an' save, I say. You don't haf to be able to spell. All you've got to do is to read an' write a little."

"Well, gentlemen," remarked the Colonel, "to expedite matters, I will set as clerk until you can get some one else."

He wrote down their names and called the roll, requesting each man when his name was called, to state whether or not he knew of any violations of the law.

"They answered 'no,'" until Grace's patience became sore.

"Why, gentlemen," said he, "you know very well that several men have been killed in this county since the last term. The English ship the Dayana capsized when launched and many persons were killed. She was raised and repaired the Rose, but only to be sunk at her anchor in harbor. Again raised, she was ashore, was got off with difficulty and named fresh. The Lanthie, and a month ago on route to Smyrna she struck a rock on the Irish coast and is laid up for repairs."

"An examination of 8,736 prescriptions to a Boston drug store showed that 504 different drugs were called for by the doctors. Quinine took the lead by appearing in 292 prescriptions, morphine in 171, iodine of potassium in 155, and mercury in 134. The whole number of articles in the pharmacopoeia is 994, and Boston used more than half of them.—Boston Journal.

The Turkish woman is superstitious in the extreme. She believes in charms. She will not live an hour bereft of her three-curved bit of leather which encloses the mystic phrase that is potent to ward off evil spirits. She distrusts Tuesday as the mother of ill-luck, and will not celebrate the British anniversaries of her children; or even record the date, lest some magician use it to cast a spell against the child.

Compared with those of the British child, writes Miss Gordon, the more Woolston meditatively, "all the skies of the United States are blue. In the north this blue is clear, strong, bright; in the south a softness mingles with the brilliancy and tempers it to a beauty which is not surpassed. The sky over the cotton lands of South Carolina is as soft as the downy clouds that blue over the silver beaches of Florida melts as languorously as that above Capri's enchanted shore."

The Governor of Irkutsk, Russia, set out some months ago to explore the territory over which he ruled, and en route across a town of 500 people, with 160 houses, four ancient churches and the Russian Government had never heard of this lost town was found to have a Republican form of government, although not one of the inhabitants could read or write any language. Oddly enough they told the Governor they were sorry they had been discovered.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Over eighty years was the average age of the persons who died in Dublin, N. H., last year.

One of the Washington Treasury clerks is able to count 4,000 new notes in an hour for seven hours a day.—Washington Post.

The British army has now a field kitchen, the first of which will go like that of a steam fire engine, and do its work while on the march.

Investigations made by a committee of the British Association show that a man really grows in stature up to his fifth year, although the growth is very slow after twenty.

Four bags were invented by the Pennsylvanian Moravians, whose thrift habits would not permit the waste of paper used in the old-fashioned method of putting up bundles.

A seventy-two-year-old citizen of Belfast, Me., some time ago dreamed that he had made away with his life, and brooded over the vision until a few days ago, when he realized it with a razor.

The Florida Keys commence with Key West and extend for about 150 miles around the southern and southeastern coasts of the peninsula, gradually approaching the main-land, until finally they connect with it.

Rocky Mountain squirrels, which are considerably larger than the ordinary American squirrels, with rich golden brown fur and silver-gray heads, are in demand for shipment to England, where they are valued at fifty dollars per pair.

The average cost of a marriage license in this country is one dollar and twenty cents. Colorado, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Rhode Island and Wisconsin charge nothing. New Jersey twelve cents, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont and Connecticut fifty cents, and so on up to Maryland, the highest of the lot, one dollar and fifty cents.

Far out at sea along both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of Florida, are several springs of fresh water. They are not known to the Dayana capsized when launched and many persons were killed. She was raised and repaired the Rose, but only to be sunk at her anchor in harbor. Again raised, she was ashore, was got off with difficulty and named fresh. The Lanthie, and a month ago on route to Smyrna she struck a rock on the Irish coast and is laid up for repairs.

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How the Chinaman Makes Provisions for His Comfort After He Is Dead.