

# THE FREE CITIZEN.

E. A. WEBSTER, Editor and Proprietor.

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## TIMELY TOPICS.

The clay pits near New Brunswick, N. J., yield annually some 235,000 tons of clay, worth over \$1,000,000.

The Phoenix Cotton Factory, near Baltimore, on the Northern Central Railway, was sold under the hammer, last week, for \$95,000. Besides the mill proper, the sale included machinery, tenement and storerooms, and 136½ acres of ground.

The British Arctic expedition will winter at a point only 450 geographical miles from the north pole, and the explorers expect to start upon their important mission in April. All that science and experience can suggest has been done to make this expedition a success.

EXPERIMENTS prove that coffee can be raised in every portion of California where the soil is congenial. California plants produce twenty-two shoots, while those of Europe produce but one. The California soil is believed to be more favorable, as, unlike those of European countries, it needs no irrigation.

MORE stoves are annually manufactured, by a single Albany firm, than are made in France and England combined for the same period. They employ 600 men and a half million of capital, and their business last year amounted to \$1,000,000. They are running to their fullest capacity to fill orders, foreign and domestic.

PENNSYLVANIA has passed a new law to cover cases of abduction like that of Charlie Ross. The law imposes a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars, and imprisonment at hard labor not exceeding fifteen years, on conviction of complicity in harboring, or concealing, or enticing away, any child, either within or without that commonwealth.

The population of the original thirteen states of the Union in 1790, the period of the first census, together with that of Maine, Vermont, Kentucky and Tennessee, which were formed from the original thirteen, and admitted to the Union subsequent to 1790, was only 3,929,214. The population of the same states, in 1870—our last census—was 19,970,809; showing a gain of 16,041,195 from 1790 to 1870.

PETROLEUM and arson are not the only enemies of the Underwriters. Sparks from a lighted pipe have caused the destruction of many a superb steamboat, causing a fearful loss of life, as well as of valuable cargoes. A gentlemanly smoker, who throws down a cigar stump carelessly, is often the "unknown cause" of many fires. Cannot insurance companies devise greater care in this matter, and thus avoid many heavy losses?

The Southern Pacific railroad is meeting with much opposition. The change of gauge, according to a report just made to the Memphis chamber of commerce, cuts Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, North Mississippi, Virginia and Maryland, out of all chance to a participation in its advantages. But can that be justly called a Southern Pacific railroad which excludes two-thirds of the population of the Southern States from all participation in its benefits?

It appears from a statement just issued by the Statistical Bureau that in the fiscal year ending June, 1874—the last year of which the Bureau has made up full returns—that our domestic exports amounted, in specie value, to over \$569,500,000. For the same period of the previous decade, that ending June 30, 1864, the special value of the exports was but \$763,500,000—an increase of more than three-fold in ten years.

From the discussions of the Association of the Boards of Trade in England, we gather the pregnant fact, that notwithstanding the balance of trade with the world at large is in favor of England, it yet frequently happens that gold is exported to meet balances against her at particular periods. Another fact is also demonstrated, and that is, that gold is a commodity which goes where it is needed, and where it will bring the best price.

The state railroad tax assessors of Tennessee have just completed their labors at Nashville, under the law, just enacted, which makes railroads liable to a tax for both state and county purposes. The railroads were all allowed to choose between being taxed 1½ per cent. on their gross earnings or 40 cents on the \$100 on the assessed value of their property lying in the state. Nine embraced the former proposition, including the Memphis and Charleston, while fourteen refused the 1½ per cent. alternative—some denying the right of the state to tax their roads. It is estimated that the

taxes derived from all lines of railroad in Tennessee will aggregate \$100,000.

The arguments in favor of a Southern Pacific railroad, of proper gauge, may be briefly stated, as follows: Such a road can only be built with government aid; the government need not risk any thing in granting the aid required to build it; it can be built at less than a third of the expense of the existing line, and can be operated proportionately more cheaply; it will furnish much the shortest transit across the continent; it will not be liable to the snow and ice barriers of the northern route; it will open the best part of our western territories and states to settlement; it will increase foreign immigration and attract foreign capital; and, finally, it will be of incalculable advantage to the trade interests of the whole country by breaking up a formidable monopoly, and greatly reducing the cost of transportation between the eastern and western divisions of the continent as well as between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Our sources of wealth, says the New York Express, are remarkable. The gold and silver products of the United States in 1874 were \$72,000,000. Of this, California furnishes \$20,300,000, Nevada \$35,452,000, Utah \$5,900,000, Colorado \$4,191,000, Montana \$3,439,000, and Idaho \$1,880,000. Nearly all of this went abroad to pay for imports. Gold and silver, adds the editor, are an important source to wealth; but comparing their yield with some other products, the mistake is found. The United States corn crop is worth four times as much as the gold and silver crop, and the wheat crop five times as much; the cotton crop more than three times as much, and the hay crop four times as much. California, with all its gold would be a poor state but for its wheat crop. Carlyle is right. Let us plant potatoes and corn, by all means, and do not busy ourselves too much digging for gold.

The report of the Massachusetts bureau of statistics shows that the annual surplus earnings of the families of mechanics, as indicated by the earnings of 397 families, is \$24.72; of these 497 families, 58 ran in debt, 92 earned a surplus of \$9.86, 110 a surplus of \$20.25, 71 a surplus of \$32.48, 38 a surplus of \$57.77, 16 a surplus of \$49.51, 4 a surplus of \$105.80, 4 a surplus of \$129.35, 2 a surplus of \$172, and 1 a surplus of \$228.75 and of \$275.80. The wages of two families were over \$1,600, 64 between \$900 and \$1,600, and 331 from \$300 to \$1,000. The average earnings of the whole were \$762, and the average expenses \$738. Of 250 families, however, the scale of wages ranged from \$500 to \$800, with a proportionate scale of expenses, leaving an annual average surplus of \$5.13 to \$20.25. Only one workman in a hundred owns the house in which his family resides.

The failure of the Bank of California is now known to have been precipitated, in large part, by the unprecedented shipments of gold from San Francisco from January to July. The shipment of gold for the first six months of 1874 footed up \$2,311,400; for the same period in 1875, it reached the startling sum of \$18,257,400! No such amount of gold had ever been shipped from that city in the same period. In fact it was more than the market could bear. Even during the London panic in 1866, no such volume of coin disappeared. Hence the inconvenience. But the coin movement began to fall off in July, and has been still less this month to date.

PERIODS of financial depression, amounting sometimes to panics, have pervaded all nations. Of the cause no satisfactory solution can be made. For more than two years past England has been subject to this depression. It seems to be greater now than at any previous time. Heavy and disastrous failures have added to the trouble, and hence capital is unnecessarily cautious, and thereby a great existing evil, without apparent cause, has been greatly aggravated. The same state of things, to a considerable extent, exists on the continent.

A LATE London letter gives this report of the condition of monetary affairs there: "The official minimum is still 2 per cent., and in open market the best bills are taken at 1½ to 1¾ per cent. The supply of money seeking employment is very large, and there is but little prospect of any diminution. There is just now, owing to the timidity of the public, a great demand for sound dividend-paying securities. These have been forced up in value to a point which yields to the investor but a small return of interest; but as safety is every consideration with the public, it is necessary to be content with small profits. Among these

are United States government and first mortgage railroad bonds. These are quoted at high prices. Second-rate securities cheap and much neglected.

The president of the Continental insurance company of New York, in a convention of insurance men held last week, made the astounding statement, that the losses of insurance companies in this country are six times greater than in England; that in his own company, he thinks twenty per cent. of the losses paid are for fraudulent claims, saying nothing of claims that are fraudulent and not paid; that legislatures often do all they can to help swindlers of insurance companies; that the law courts "generally" strain the law in favor of incendiaries, and that the honest part of the community has to make up for those burdens on the companies. This cannot be said to form an agreeable picture for contemplation.

The consumption of Brazil coffee in this country is enormous. During the season of 1874 it was 103,751 tons, or an average of 8,646 tons per month. This was the largest consumption of Brazil coffee in the United States that was ever known, with the exception of that of 1870, when 108,502 tons were consumed. The coffee trade is now on a firm footing, and the consumption steadily increasing, especially in this country, where it is about one-fourth of that of the entire world. It is worthy of note that the world's consumption of coffee is nearly, if not fully, 425,000 tons, or 985,000,000 pounds! The people of the United States consume more coffee than any other people on the globe. The main source of coffee supply is Brazil, but Java, Ceylon, and the West Indies furnish a considerable quantity. The yearly value of the coffee crop is estimated, by an Amsterdam authority, at first hands, at \$125,000,000, and this amount is considerably reduced before it flows back from the consumer.

The September report of the department of agriculture says of the cotton crop: "Could it be thoroughly ripened, its aggregate would exceed any previous crop, and the yield per acre would be one of the best, notwithstanding the losses by the overflow of bottoms and the saturation of heavy flat soils. Such losses have proved less than the usual damages by drought and insects, while the rains have greatly benefitted the crops on drier and higher soils. Nearly everywhere corn is late in maturing from one to two weeks. In general a high condition is still maintained, the average being one per cent. higher than in August. The state averages are:

Maine	107	New Hampshire	100
Vermont	98	Massachusetts	100
Connecticut	108	New York	98
New Jersey	111	Pennsylvania	108
Delaware	100	Maryland	108
Virginia	112	North Carolina	105
South Carolina	83	Georgia	110
Florida	83	Alabama	91
Mississippi	116	Louisiana	115
Texas	89	Arkansas	103
Tennessee	114	West Virginia	107
Kentucky	103	Ohio	97
Michigan	101	Indiana	83
Illinois	95	Wisconsin	80
Minnesota	72	Iowa	82
Missouri	111	Kansas	109
Nebraska	83	California	85
Oregon	100		

DIRECT Trade with South America, from Southern ports, is certain sooner or later to be accomplished. At the present time there is no regular and reliable communication with Venezuela, and hence there are now importing steam engines from England. Our hold upon Brazil has sensibly diminished since the failure of a Baltimore firm that was engaged in exporting provisions and manufactures thither in exchange for Brazilian coffee and other products. This circumstance will result favorably to the efforts of the Mississippi Valley Company in establishing Direct Trade in that portion of the world. Their ships will have the advantage, too, of a shorter distance from New Orleans to South America, and all the gains of interior water communication. Even the Philadelphia North American confesses that the interests of the people of the entire country will be directly or indirectly benefited by Direct Trade between Southern ports and South America, the enterprise being really National and not local.

THE SECRET OF HEALTH.—M. Robing, an eminent French chemist, announces to the French Academy of Medicine his belief that life exists only in combustion which occurs in our bodies—like that which takes place in chimneys—leaves a detritus which is fatal to life. To remove this, he would administer lactic acid with ordinary food. This acid is known to possess the power of removing or destroying the intrusions which form on the arteries, cartilages, and valves of the heart; and, as buttermilk abounds in such acid, and is, moreover, an acceptable kind of food, its habitual use, it is urged by M. Robing, will free the system from these causes, which inevitably cause death between the seventy-fifth and one hundredth year.

## MAN NOT DEGENERATING.

The Modern Egyptian as Big as the Egyptian of Thousands of Years Ago—The Modern Englishman Bigger Than His Ancestors.

There never was a delusion with less evidence for it, except a permanent impression among mankind, which is often the result, not of accumulated experience, but of an ever-renewing discontent with the actual state of things. There is not the slightest evidence anywhere that man was ever bigger, stronger, swifter, or more enduring under the same conditions of food and climate than he is now.

As to the bigness, the evidence is positive. Modern Egyptians are as big as the mummies who were conquerors in their day, and modern Englishmen are bigger. There are not in existence a thousand coats of armor which an Englishman regiment could put on. Very few moderns can use ancient swords, because the hilts are too small for their hands. Endless wealth and skill were expended in picking gladiators, and there is no evidence that a man among them was as big or as strong as Shaw. No skeleton, no statue, no pictures, indicates that men in general were bigger. The Jews of to-day are as large as they were in Egypt, or larger. The people of the Romagna have all the bearing and more than the size of the Roman soldiery. No feat is recorded as usual with Greek athletes which English acrobats could not perform now.

There is no naked savage tribe which naked Cornishmen or Yorkshiresmen could not strangle. No race exists of which a thousand men similarly armed would defeat an English, or German, or Russian, regiment of equal numbers. Nothing is recorded of our forefathers here in England which Englishmen could not do, unless it be some feats of archery, which were the results of a long training of the eye continued for generations. The most civilized and luxurious family that ever existed, the European royal casts, is physically as big, heathly, and as powerful as any people of whom we have any account that science can accept. Theirs' Frenchman in Caesar's Gaul in all bodily conditions, and with an increased power of keeping alive, which may be partly owing to improved conditions of living, but is probably owing still more to developed vitality. There is no evidence that even the feeble races are feebler than they became after their first acclimatization.

The Bengalee was what we know him twelve hundred years ago, and the Chinamen was represented on porcelain just as he is now before the birth of Christ. No race ever multiplied like the Anglo-Saxon, which has had no advantage of climate, and till lately no particular advantage of food. Physical condition depends on physical conditions, and why should a race better fed, better clothed, and better housed than it ever was before degenerate? Because it eats corn instead of berries? Compare the California and the Digger Indian. Because it wears clothes? The wearing of clothes, if burdensome—which the experience of army doctors in India as to the best costume for marching makes excessively doubtful, they declaring unanimously that breeches men suffer from varicose veins, as men wearing trousers do not—must operate as a permanent physical training. You carry weight habitually. Because they keep indoors? Compare English professionals with Tasmanian savages, living in identically the same climate, but living out of doors.

The conditions of civilization not only do not prohibit Capt. Webb, who would have out-walked, out-swum, or strangled any German that Tacitus ever romanced about, but they enabled him to live to seventy instead of dying at forty-five, as two thousand years ago he, then probably a slave bred for the arena, would have done.

That the human race, even under the best conditions, advances very little in physical capacities is true, but then it is true also that those conditions are not fatal to the most powerful of the old improving forces, the survival of the fittest. Still an advance is perceptible in vital power, and we question whether a Greek swimmer would ever have crossed from Dover to Calais, just as strongly as we question whether the ancient world ever possessed a horse which would have achieved a place at Epsom. Why should men grow feeble in civilization any more than horses.—London Spectator.

## The Commercial Prosperity of France.

A financial journal publishes some information respecting the commercial situation of France before and since the war, which prove to a certain extent what Macaulay said about no form of government hindering the march of prosperity. Wealth in England steadily increased under Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., Cromwell, etc., nor have a provisional government and a republic prevented the development of the resources of this country. The total commercial movement, exports and imports, for 1874 (which will prove inferior to that of 1875) amounted to 7,625,764,000 francs—say £300,000,000—exceeding that of 1869 by about £59,000,000, when the Empire was at the height of its prosperity, and when Alsace and Lorraine belonged to France. The railways are consequently doing a larger business. The Western line has improved 6,000 francs a mile; the Northern, 7,000 francs; Lyons, 9,000 francs; the Eastern, 14,000 francs; the Southern, 16,000 francs. As far as Paris is concerned there are fewer failures, and the theatrical receipts—sign of luxury—show an increase of 7,000,000 francs over those of 1869. In spite of restless politicians, floods and other partial disasters, there can be no doubt that France has nothing to envy

plain of, and that she has more than recovered that material welfare which is supposed to have unnerved her under the immoral and luxurious empire. There is, of course, a dark side to this brilliant picture not alluded to by the financial writer, to wit, the extra burdens with which the country is saddled.

## Deep Tilling and Under-Draining.

Intelligent and observing tillers of the soil in almost every section of the country where the drouth has prevailed to any considerable extent during the past season, have been strikingly impressed with the surprising advantage to the growing crops arising from thorough drainage of heavy soils in connection with deep tillage and abundant fertilization of the seed-bed. When the water-line of a heavy soil that is disposed to be wet, is sunk by means of a system of thorough underdraining, say thirty or more inches beneath the surface of the soil, if the seed-bed be broken up deep, the finely comminuted soil will retain a much larger quantity of moisture in dry and hot weather than if there were no under-drains. As the soil is deepened by underdraining and deep plowing, the capacity to absorb moisture from the atmosphere is greatly augmented. Hence, in a dry season, if the seed-bed be broken up deep, the roots of growing plants spread farther in every direction through the soil; and as the mellow earth will absorb a much larger quantity of moisture than if the entire strata were one solid mass, every growing plant is, in a great measure, fortified against the trying influences of hot and dry weather. Underdraining and deep ploughing, in numerous instances, have been the means of saving large crops from utter ruin by protracted drouth. Hence, many farmers have been led to appreciate the advantages of underdraining and deep tillage where the soil was heavy, as they have never done before. It will pay well to under-drain wet land and to plow it deep, whether the growing season is to be too wet or too dry.

## Dull Life in Portugal.

A writer on Portugal life says: The larger of the country towns have streets full of gentlemen's houses, and here vegetate from year to year families who are just rich enough to live without working. To live, indeed, as the Portuguese do in such towns need cost but little. A large house, with a plot of cabbages, a kale yard behind it, with whitewashed walls, floors uncarpeted, a dozen wooden chairs, one or two deal tables; no fireplace, not even a stove, either in sitting or bedroom; no curtains to the windows, no covers to the tables, no pictures on the walls, no mirrors; no tables pleasantly strewn with books, magazines, newspapers, and ladies' work; no such thing visible as a pot of cut flowers; no rare china, no clocks, no bronzes—none of the hundred trifles and curiosities with which in our houses we show our taste or want of it, but which either way give such an individual character and charm to English homes. All these negatives describe the utterly dreary habitations of the middle-class Portuguese. For occupations the women do needlework, gossip, go to mass daily, and look out of window by the hour. Except the one short walk to church at eight o'clock in the morning, a Portuguese lady hardly ever appears in the streets. As to the men, they lounge about among the shops, they smoke innumerable paper cigarettes, they take a "siesta" in the heat of the day. If there is any sunshine they stand in groups at the street corners, with umbrellas over their heads; in winter they wear a shawl over their shoulders, folded and put on three-cornerwise; as a French or English woman's shawl is worn—for this is a fashion in Portugal, and the Spaniards laugh a good deal at their neighbors on the score of their being a nation who invert the due order of things. In these towns there is never any news, and if two men are seen in eager discussion of some matter of apparently immense importance, and if one happens to be near enough to overhear the subject of conversation, be sure that one of them is plunged in despair or killing with enthusiasm at a rise or fall of a half-penny in the price of a pound of tobacco. There are not even fashions for them to think about; young men and old men dress alike, but the younger men wear exceedingly tight boots, and when they "take their walks abroad" it is obvious that they do so in considerable discomfort. The young men however, have one occupation more important even than wearing tight boots—that of making the very mildest form of love known among them. The process, indeed, is carried on in so platonic a manner and with so much proper feeling that I doubt if even the strictest English governess would find anything to object to. The young gentlemen pay their addresses by simply standing in front of the houses occupied by the objects of their affections, while the young persons in question look down approvingly from the upper windows, and there the matter ends.

AFRICAN EXPLORATIONS.—A company has been formed in Berlin which proposes to found at Choa, the most southern province of Abyssinia, a permanent settlement, in order to send out scientific expeditions into the unexplored portion of Africa, and to develop the commerce of the country. The objects of the company are, however, supposed to be more commercial than scientific.

Only nine persons out of a hundred are insane from hereditary causes. The jim-jams instance, are more read-hereditary than hereditary.

Mcody and Sankey will groan inwardly when they return to Chicago and find the Bible banished from the public schools.

## FACTS AND FANCIES.

A tree in Ceylon is said to have been standing more than two thousand years. The Buddhist priests sell its leaves as a panacea for sin, and it is a real bonanza to those pious teachers.

It is said that the game of chess was invented by a tender woman, more than two thousand years ago. She was a queen, and played the first game with the teeth she had extracted from one of her slaughtered enemies.

Hans Tammer, an Austrian, is exhibiting in Paris a canine quartet. He has four dogs, and he has taught each dog to bark in two notes, and each dog's notes are different from those of the other dogs. He thus commands eight notes, and gives "Le donne mobile" and some other pieces.

While a couple of women were discussing the other day, the merits of a certain physician, one of them asked the other what kind of a doctor he was. "Sure, I dunno," was the reply, "but I think it's an alpaca doctor they call him."

Chateaubriand said, "Mme. Chateaubriand would not dine later than five. I was never hungry till seven. But we compromised and dined at six, so that we could neither of us enjoy it; and that is what people call the happiness of mutual concessions."

It will hardly be necessary to tell the name of the facetious party who went into a village dry goods store the other day, and was observed to be looking about, when the proprietor remarked to him that they didn't keep whisky. "It would save you a good many steps if you did," was the stage-driver's quick reply.

A tramping printer on the route between New York and Newburgh, is accompanied by his wife. When asked the other day by a country editor, why he carried her around with him, remarked that she took him for better or worse, and having had a good taste of the latter, was endeavoring to find out where the better came in.

"Job printing?" exclaimed an old lady, the other day, as she peep over her spectacles, at the advertising page of a country paper. "Poor Job! I've kept him printing, week after week, ever since I learnt to read; and if he were the patientest man that ever was, he never could have stood it so long, no how?"

I was acquainted once with a gallant soldier who assured me that his only method of courage was this: Upon the first fire in an engagement he immediately looked upon himself as a dead man. He then fought out the remainder of the day perfectly regardless of all manner of danger, as becomes a dead man to be. So that all the life or limbs he carried back to his tent he reckoned as clear gain, or, as he himself expressed it, "so much out of the fire."—Sterna.

## How to Hold Fertility of the Soil.

Gypsum attracts. It is not only a manure in itself, but it attracts the atmosphere that comes in contact with it, which is abundant on windy days, but it catches and holds the fertility of the ground that in some soils escapes. Lime will also do this—so will clay. Clay, dried and powdered, is an excellent thing to put on a barn-yard, or to cover a compost heap with, or work through the heap; hence we use gypsum or lime in our stables or privies. Gypsum is best; it has the most attraction, besides other properties. A little should be kept by every farmer for use, even at high cost, as the benefit is sometimes more important than the high price. But we waste our manure; we not only permit its strength to escape, but we are glad to get it out of the way. The same recklessness extends to the land. It is well our land has a good proportion of clay to hold its strength.

We must conserve. The time is not far distant when we shall be compelled to do it. Already there are symptoms of lack in our soil; we do not raise as heavy crops as we used to—here and there a field, here and there a farm is less productive. It is not so much that we need plaster here in the west to hold the strength of the soil, as to use it to abstract it from the atmosphere, and to save the ammonia of our barn-yards and stables. For this let us always keep a little on hand. Let us save and improve our manure and thus save our farms.—Rural World.

THE FAST MAIL TRAINS.—A feeling has prevailed among commercial men since the establishment of the new fast mail trains that their interests were being sacrificed to those of the morning newspapers by the post-office department. The idea got abroad that mercantile letters were delayed until morning, and that the time of transmission to the west was thereby increased instead of diminished under the new arrangement. A number of merchants and publishers of evening newspapers met at No. 17 Broadway yesterday, and Major Bangs addressed the assemblage, explaining the system of railway service of the United States very fully, and said that the city could not possibly be better served than it is at present. The morning trains from this city had been arranged to catch most of the through trains in the west. Thus everything combined to render a fast evening train of no practical value. In planning the new service all these things had been carefully weighed, the principal object being to accommodate the large cities which are the distributing agencies. Should any new considerations of importance be offered to the department Major Bangs promised that care would be taken to give them the attention they might demand.—M. B. Brown.