

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

This 12,000,000-bale cotton crop is very discouraging to the boll weevil.

Outside of stonecutting, about the hardest sort of work is keeping a diary.

The inventor of the "gold brick" is dead, but many counterfeits survive him.

It will not be so very long before you are talking about things that happened 'way back in the year '04.

The man who thinks he must have an office is much like the man who thinks the world owes him a living.

He who attends strictly to his own business has no time to waste on visionary schemes for saving the country.

Marie Corelli says Andrew Carnegie is vulgar. Perhaps Andrew didn't take off his hat when Marie got in the elevator.

Many a man who isn't satisfied with the life he has pursued drops store almanacs and acquires others he knows not of.

How did we ever get along without "frenzied" in our daily vocabulary? It's fully as forceful and useful as "strenuous."

How the dowager empress of China has been converted to Christianity, there will be a speedy improvement in the treatment of the "foreign devil."

Edmund Russell has a series of rules on "How to Get Rid of a Lover." We select the most cogent: "Never laugh when he laughs." That is enough for any girl to work on.

A woman was arrested at Jersey City a few days ago for obtaining \$1,500 on bad checks. Considering the brevity of her financial career, she couldn't have been much for looks.

A Massachusetts pastor left the stub of his cigar in his study the other day, the result being a fire which destroyed the church. Here is another strong argument against the use of tobacco by ministers.

Morocco has explained things to France and another war scare is thus dispipated. It was fortunate that Morocco didn't feel obliged to win at least one important victory before listening to peace talk.

The greatest hope of the Russian people lies in the awakening of the Russian press. Once it takes the bit in its teeth all the autocracy of the Czar's domains cannot drive it where it would not go.

A Japanese statistical pamphlet states that a Japanese may divorce his wife for talking too much. The latest actual figures show that with fewer than 800,000 Japanese marriages reported in the year there were more than 80,000 divorces.

The modern method of letter-writing composition, through the agency of the stenographer, is having a peculiar effect upon the popular use of the language. It must be evident to even the non-critical observer that carelessness and diffuseness of expression have become a feature and a fault of correspondence, from the reproach of which it was quite free in the earlier day when pen and ink were directly employed by the individual to the end of giving form and coherence to his ideas.

The boys in the farm school on Thompson's Island in Boston harbor believe in maintaining discipline. Two or three of them were arrested recently by the school police, on the charge of trespassing and destroying property in one of the cottages. They were tried by their comrades. In the course of the trial one spectator was disorderly, and, according to the report of the proceedings, "he was at once fined ten cents and sent to bed" for contempt of court. The boys accused of trespassing were acquitted by a jury of their peers.

After vaccinated lap dogs, silver bath tubs for toy spaniels, gum shoes, perfumed cushions, witch hazel nose and eye washes, made-to-measure mackintoshes and pyjamas for the dyspeptic pets of the rich women of New York, as brought into public notice by the recent show at the Waldorf-Astoria, there seemed little left in the way of idiotic extravagance. The limit then set has been surpassed by one woman, who sent to Paris for seven pairs—one for each day in the week—of hand-made bath slippers for her King Charles spaniel. Pretty soon these people will make as much fuss over a pet's as over a daughter's trousseau.

It is a fact of which the medical profession is well aware that the better class of newspapers are the great educators of the common people. They furnish them with their high school and college courses and do more than any other agency to form the opinions of the great multitude. This being the case, it behooves all reputable physicians to join in an effort to give the papers such medical reading matter as will interest and instruct their readers. In no other way could preventive medicine be taught so thoroughly and successfully as through the medium of newspaper publicity. Unthinking people, and indeed many of independent mind, believe absolutely everything they read in their paper. Therefore preventive medicine could easily be instilled into the minds of this body.

From earliest times the law's delay has been subject for denunciation. The pompous pretense that the machinery of the law must move at slow and dignified pace is as strictly kept up today as in olden times. How much the hunger of lawyers and court officials for accumulating fees influences delays in a question which it might be indelicate to discuss. The case of Harry Gagan of Cleveland, injured by

a railway train, which was begun through his guardian ten years ago, when he was a boy of 11 and which went up through all the courts and was remanded to the original court for retrial, has now been held invalid because the boy has become of age and must sue in his own name. There are cases like this occurring every day all over the country. John Rudnik of Chicago was injured in 1885. In 1904 the Supreme Court of Illinois awarded him \$10,000. If the person or firm in whose employ he was injured was prudent enough to put away a sum of \$10,000 in 1885 the beneficent operation of the principle of compound interest at 6 per cent has by this time added \$20,000 to the original deposit. The injured gets the \$20,000. The injured leg is crushed under the weight of the crushing happens. If appeals, demurrers, replies, rejoinders and other jockeyings lead justice astray for 19 years, it is not the innocent that ought to suffer. A case similar to Rudnik's came to light not long ago. A young girl was compelled to wait nine years for the \$10,000 which constituted the compensation for injuries which she had received. Such delays give an unfair advantage to the stronger party. A corporation can pay for lawyers, for costs and for appeals till the poor litigant is worn out. There ought to be some return to the poor litigant for the money that he has lost meanwhile. If interest were paid on final awards, there would be less resistance to just demands. The volume of litigation would shrink and the damage claimant, with right on his side, would not be deprived by legal filibustering of a large part of the value of his claim—that is, of its interest-bearing capacity. There can be no question that thousands of worthy causes are never taken into court because of the lack of means for the long litigation. The delay is often so extreme that even when the courts grant the redress that is due it comes too late to afford the relief that might have been given if all the resources of the machinery of justice had not been used to deprive the sufferer of what should have been promptly awarded. Railways and other corporations, whose numerous employees are liable to be injured or killed, complain bitterly of the damage suits that are brought against them on mere speculation. This is the natural and legitimate result of their influence upon the procedure in courts. The widow and orphan of a poor man who has been killed by such a corporation would be utterly helpless to support a long-continued contest in court, except for the Nemesis who comes in the person of the lawyer who takes damage suits on speculation.

CURIOUS OLD CLOCKS.

Timepieces Dating Back 600 Years on Exhibition in Europe.

We learn from the French newspapers that among many interesting objects acquired by the state from the late Princess Mathilde's collection is a wonderful alarm clock which was once the pride of the great Napoleon, and which not only tells the day of the month and the year, the mean solar time and the phases of the moon, but sounds every quarter of an hour and is provided with a thermometer.

Few things are more surprising than the skill of past generations of clock-makers, who not only made timepieces of the most complicated character, but of such excellent workmanship that they seem almost made for all time. There is at Castletown, in the Isle of Man, a clock which was telling Manxmen the time of day before Oliver Cromwell was cradled and which might have listened to an account of the armada from the lips of men who had seen the Spanish galleons, and this very clock, which Queen Bess herself presented to Castle Rushen 307 years ago, is marking time just as conscientiously for King Edward's subjects in the twentieth century.

At the South Kensington Museum anyone who chooses may see to-day the very clock which Peter Lightfoot made for Glastonbury Abbey about 1325, when John Wycliffe was in his cradle, and another clock which was ticking merrily in Dover Castle in 1348, two years after Crecy was fought. In 1876 this clock was going as smoothly as it did more than five centuries before, while the Society of Antiquaries has a portable clock made at Prague as long ago as 1525.

In the Town of Schramberg, in the Black Forest, there is an alarm clock which warned sleepers it was time to get up when Charles II. was King of England. It was made in 1680 and is an ingenious piece of workmanship. In form it resembles a lantern in which is a lighted candle, the wick of which is automatically clipped every minute by a pair of scissors. The candle is slowly pushed upward by a spring, which also controls the mechanism of the clock, and at the required hour of waking an alarm is sounded, and at the same time the movable sides of the lantern fall and the room is flooded with light.

A pendulum clock, made in 1682 and once owned by Cromwell, is preserved to-day in the Philadelphia Library, and another, made in Germany in 1640, was recently doctored by a Connecticut clockmaker and is now running for six months at a time without winding.—Tit Bits.

A Locust's Breathing.

Hold a locust between your fingers and watch the breathing movements of the body. Professor Packard says, "There were sixty-five contractions in a minute in a locust which had been held between the fingers about ten minutes." How does that compare with the number of breaths you take each minute? Insects of swiftest flight breathe most rapidly.—St. Nicholas.

The Largest Locomotive.

What is probably the biggest locomotive in the world has just been completed at Schenectady for hauling freight over the Rocky Mountains. It measures 70 feet on a level track can haul a train of cars a mile and a half long.

A father who was up with his sick child in the night is not half so cross the next day as the bachelor who has been up with too much society.

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