

Topics of the Times

Many a congressional discussion is well termed "exhaustive."

Josh Billings also was among the earliest of the spelling defomers.

An ounce of honest criticism is worth more than a pound of flattery.

Carnegie says millionaires who laugh are rare. Why don't they read the sayings of millionaires?

Russell Sage says people are foolish to want to travel in airships when it is so much cheaper to walk.

It appears that Dr. Osier never made that chloroforming speech. Some people simply can't help becoming famous.

Forgiving without forgetting is a good deal like giving a receipt for money without signing your name to it.

There is no likelihood that the czar will succeed in being much of a reformer as long as he retains his present kitchen cabinet.

Physicians say that no exercise is as healthful as walking. This may be true, but it is poor consolation to the man who can't afford an automobile.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., says it is not necessary for a young man to sow wild oats. But then young Mr. Rockefeller never attended a naval academy.

In Finland "law and liberty of the press" is officially called Tryckfrihetlag. It is a pretty big name for a thing that appears to cut a very small figure over there.

Two men are going to hunt for the north pole in an automobile. Just turn an automobile loose in the arctic regions and if there is any pole to run against it will surely hit it.

A bank cashier who pleaded guilty to "abstraction, embezzlement and false entry" has been sentenced to six years in Auburn prison. For plain theft he would have been entitled to twice that.

A commercial report notes the great development of Switzerland's imports of coal tar colors and dyes. Are the Swiss going extensively into the manufacture of pure jams, jellies, butters and preserves?

Francis Burton Harrison says everything on the Isthmus of Panama is all right, only that no one is digging to amount to anything. The digging seems to be done only in the vicinity of Uncle Sam's pockets.

John D. Rockefeller was likened by a member of his son's Bible class to Moses, Washington and Lincoln—and yet Moses led his people to the promised land, Washington couldn't tell a lie and Lincoln abolished slavery.

A former captain in the federal army recovered recently a copy of "Paradise Lost" which he had dropped on the field of Antietam more than forty years ago. It would be interesting to learn whether the person who has had it all these years succeeded in getting it read through.

Professor Edward A. Ross, of the University of Nebraska, uses the term "the American breed" to describe what he calls a distinct type of man—the restless, strenuous people so different from the easy-going types of Europe. There are reasons why our immigrants should become nervous and energetic in one or two generations, but Professor Ross seems to think that the restlessness is not acquired here, but is the reason why these types left Europe. America is, therefore, weeding out the energetic folks from Europe—they are selected, venturesome natures and constitute a type.

A St. Petersburg dispatch says that some 70,000 persons have been arrested in European Russia since the government entered on its active campaign against the revolutionists. It also says that the government has instructed the governors that persons arrested for political offenses must be informed of the charge against them and permitted to make explanations within twenty-four hours. So it seems that Russia is not progressing rapidly in the direction of liberty. It is something that political offenders must be given a hearing within a reasonable time, but it does not follow that they are dealt with any the less rigorously in the end.

The Duke of Abruzzi, cousin of the King of Italy, whose exploring party approached the North Pole more nearly than any other party, has completed arrangements for a trip of exploration in Africa. He proposes to land at Mombasa, the capital of British East Africa; then he will cross Victoria Nyanza—"nyanza," as those who consult their dictionaries know, means lake in Africa, as "Kiang" means river in China—and afterward climb the Elgon mountain near Uganda. As the tours of this Italian nobleman always increase the knowledge of the world, the report of the results of this latest one will be awaited with considerable interest.

Foreign and native critics of American life have by iteration accustomed us to regard ourselves as a commercial,

material nation. It is good to turn sharply and question this view. Prof. Francis Peabody, the first professor sent to the University of Berlin by Harvard University, under the new provision for an exchange of lectures, showed his German audience that Americans are idealists. "The very cleverness of the nation leaves it unsatisfied with commercial gain." "This plain people with but meager traditions of art and philosophy are still blessed with a rich inheritance of conscience." Idealism is conduct in accordance with beliefs, as against conduct in accordance with material advantage. The corruption and materialism that exist in this country are exercises upon a national structure that was founded in ideals and has been built upon. The great Americans have been moral idealists. Hard sense in Franklin and Lincoln does not disguise a calm idealism. Many political campaigns have been contentions over principles of almost philosophical abstraction. The civil war was fought for ideals. The south crippled itself valiantly, not for profit or sordid ambition, but for devotion to principle. The north fought for no material advantage, but for an ideal of government. No spectacle in history resembles that of the once hostile sections of America still in frank agreement about the issues contended for, but each recognizing that the other fought for beliefs. Nearly all American men of letters are teachers about life, ethical idealists—as witness Franklin, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, Whittier, Longfellow, Thoreau. Whoever speaks a moral idea, or rises as a sincere reformer as the founder of a new Utopia, has many followers, so that our country is full of ethical cults and peaceful revolutionaries, each in pursuit of an ideal. America has thriven not merely by "natural resources" and business energy, but also because the people have been idealists.

In considering the problem of "managing the land" the mistake is commonly made of regarding the question as a matter of "hired men" entirely. That is, we are asked to believe that the land can be managed with agricultural laborers. This is certainly a mistake. If the problem is to be solved it will be by the creation of a class of small, independent land owners who will do their own work and not be dependent upon hired labor. It becomes more and more evident that the day of the American "hired man" is gone. Farm labor is not attractive to the young men of today. The tide flows from the farms to the cities and there is no return current. Except for a certain proportion of European immigrants, there is little or no influx into the rural districts. Nor is it at all strange that this should be so. The farmer who owns land is the most independent man in the world, but that cannot be said of the "hired man" who works for \$25 a month "and found." Farm work is hard, the hours are long and the opportunities for advancement are small. When land was cheap the farmhand could, by industry and thrift, acquire a farm of his own, but at the present prices of farming lands it would take a phenomenally shrewd and saving farm laborer to become a land owner. The man who depends upon manual labor for his living can do better in the city than in the country. It is to be remembered, too, that farm work is not always to be had all the year round. During the harvest season there is a large demand for help, but this demand is temporary and for many months of the year farm laborers—or "hired men"—are in small demand. This is another reason why young men do not go to the country. They have a better chance for steady employment in town. In short, the farms are not to be manned by hired labor. The solution of the problem is to be found in the creation of a great class of small, independent land owners who will do their own work. In France this class is the backbone of the nation. It will be the same in this country when the American people realize that agriculture is the freest, happiest and most healthful occupation in which man can engage.

Deacon's Family Party Ancient. The presiding elder once happened into the Sunday school room in a certain church not far from St. Louis, and was invited by the superintendent, a very pious man, to question the scholars. After asking several questions he turned to one little fellow and asked, "Who was the father of Zebedee's children?" The boy, much confused, made no reply, and the question was repeated, but without result. "Come," said the elder, "you can surely answer that." Then, pointing to the superintendent, "Who is that man?" "Deacon Smith," replied the boy. "Well, who is the father of Deacon Smith's children?" "Deacon Smith." "Yes; and if Deacon Smith is the father of Deacon Smith's children, who was the father of Zebedee's children?" The younger could hardly wait till the question was ended before he shouted triumphantly. "Deacon Smith."—Magazine of Fun.

Busy All Day. A Pueblo woman expressed her feelings after a very busy day in this manner: "I have been so busy all day that I hardly knew which way to turn! I would just get ready to go one way when someone would call me another, until I am actually bowlegged!"

It is strange that women who have no trouble picking out a crochet pattern find it impossible to pick anything out of a timetable.

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