

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Why send missionaries to Africa when a Pennsylvania court convicts a woman charged with witchcraft?

Dewey thinks the American navy is the best on earth. We earnestly hope this may not cause another scare in England.

Abdul Hamid has it doped out that it was fate that overthrew him. Fate, and a bunch of Young Turks up to the ears in guns.

An Indiana woman has just married her tenth husband. What a choice assortment of pickle dishes she must have by this time!

It should not be forgotten that Abdul Hamid is one of those misguided people who never permit themselves to be interviewed for publication.

A Detroit man was fined the other day for laughing at a woman who wore a beehive hat. Evidently he did not pay for the hat, or else he would have wept.

The czar is going to circumnavigate the globe in his yacht. The last Russian sea-going expedition did not get quite around, being stopped in the Sea of Japan.

Pullman is spending some millions enlarging its plant. There will, however, be no gymnasium for the porter. He is expected to get his exercise pulling the public leg.

Ellnor Glyn says in her new book that no American men ever tried to flirt with her. Her comments on Americans and American customs are naturally a trifle bitter.

We are glad to note that a start has been made in building a free bridge at St. Louis. A reporter for the Times of that city saw a man a day or two ago boring holes in the river.

A mean Chicago reporter took a census and discovered that among 835 Chicago clubwomen three babies were born last year. A baby somewhat interferes with club activity if you are inclined to care much for it.

A Pennsylvania woman's big hat saved her from drowning. We decline, however, to utter a word in praise of the big hat until we are assured that it was not the lady's headpiece which caused her to be blown into the water.

A retired politician laments that now he is out of power his friends have deserted him. A man of his experience should have a better sense of the meanings of words. His friends have not deserted him, only those whose professed friendship had its origin in his or their selfish ends.

China is an example of a nation which is showing itself not afraid to imitate other nations. Not long ago six graduates of the Women's Medical School at Shanghai received their diplomas. The institution was founded three years ago, and its principal is a woman. Two of the essays read by the graduates were in English.

Germany has a resourceful government. It is using an incentive to reluctant taxpayers a letter from Martin Luther. In which the great reformer says: "I gladly pay my groschen for the Turkish campaign, and hope I am among those who pay them willingly, for of grudging people there are enough. And I would also show a good example, and others can then say that Doctor Martin has helped."

who has not got rich save with some feeling of pity, if not of contempt. It is desirable that we should all shake ourselves out of this false idea and begin to understand that there are what a noted New Englander has called enduring satisfactions in life which have nothing to do with money. The love and respect and gratitude of one's fellow men are worth more in the evening of life than those who have them not can realize. Every worthy minister has these rewards, and would not exchange them for much gold.

The public refuses to get excited over the portentous fact that the American family is dwindling in size. A census bureau statistician has been compiling the figures, and he finds that in the period between the first federal census in 1790 and the last in 1900, the American family has decreased from an average of 5.3 persons to one of 4.6. Around this central fact he groups a number of others, such as the fact that, whereas the average number of children under 16 in each 1790 family was 2.8, it is now 1.5; and the fact that the ratio of whites over 20 to those under 16, has changed from .73 to .68 in the same period. While the birth rate has declined in the past century, so has the death rate. Modern science, modern methods in the prevention and cure of disease, modern common sense about matters of hygiene and health have worked wonders in adding years to human life. At the very cradle the child has a far greater life expectancy than the infants of 1790. We do not have so many children as our ancestors, but we give them a better chance to live—which is, after all, much more to be desired. The larger percentage of children who now reach maturity is compensation for the smaller aggregate number of births. And still there is much to be done in America to-day in the way of giving the child the enjoyment of its right to be well born and well nurtured.

In the slums of our great cities the percentage of infant mortality is still appalling. Filth and squalor still furnish happy hunting grounds for malignant microbes of many species. The deadly germ flourishes in the cities largely because of the concentration there of the uneducated elements that come from Europe. They bring their uncleanness and their ignorance with them. Americanization usually works a transformation, if not in them, at least in the next generation. It is a striking fact that the large family and ignorant poverty go together. The tendency of civilization, of widening intelligence, of sober thrift, is to limit the propagation of children. The obvious lesson is that crusades against tuberculosis are far better than campaigns against race suicide. It is more humane and more in accordance with the true principles of social economy to guard the purity of the milk supply than to inveigh against the reluctance of American women to rear many children. Fresh air and sanitary conditions are more to be desired than large families in which deaths are frequent.

A guest was asking him once how it was that with so little leisure he had been able to prepare a certain paper. "Yes," he assented, as he stood by the fireplace, "I hadn't much time for it; but I kept the books and papers ready on my desk, and sat down to them, even if there were only twenty minutes or so free."

"And you had to leave it," I suggested, "to correct them?" A grim look came into his face. "Do you know," he said, solemnly, placing his foot on a light chair in front of him, "that I corrected them in Harvard College for twenty-five years?" It has been remarked that Mr. Child never lifted his voice unduly; but some sort of physical emphasis was imperative, and this was furnished by the chair. As he pronounced the "twenty-five years" with the most exact and labored utterance, his foot was released, and the chair found its place half-way across the room.

Another story: Once, in a class which was reading "Hamlet," he assigned some ordinary passage to a young gentleman who had been trained to the wildest feats of "eloquence," and who now saw his chance for immortality. The rafter of that hare room at the top of University Hall fairly echoed to the frenzied performance; there were howlings of rage, the low hiss of scorn, the ringing appeal, the cry of triumph, the wail or baffled hope, all accompanied by a kind of suppressed wheeze or asthmatic undertone which I take to have been the "deep breathing" indicated by doctors of this diabolical art.

Mr. Child uncuffed himself slowly, craned out his head, lifted his spectacles, and peered, first amazed, then quizzical, then tragic, at the performer. "Heavens, man—stop!"

No Approbation. "I made a garden this year, but my next-door neighbor went in for fowls." "There'll be trouble between you." "Guess not. My garden ain't coming up and his chickens are dying of cholera."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

People have so many faults, and suffer so many humiliations, that we wonder anyone is concited.

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EDITORIALS

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

IS OUR NAVY CRIPPLED? CONCERNING a person who was what (for a reason to the writer unknown) is called a "bluffer," or "four-flusher," a well-known wit recently said: "Enter his front door and you find yourself in his back yard." One hearing that may be pardoned if he think of the American navy. It is all front—all line of battle. Behind this—nothing!

Virtually no colliers, no transports—none of the hundreds of auxiliary craft that are an essential part of a navy as the battleships themselves, for without them the battleships are impotent for aggression—good for nothing but defense of our home ports.

Lacking these servitor craft at the back of it, and at the back of these a merchant marine, and at the back of that a coast population of deep-water sailors and fishing folk, a fleet of fighting ships is like an army without teams, trains, forges, pontoons, telegraphs, varied industries and a warlike people.

There is not a naval attaché at any embassy in Washington who has not repeatedly demonstrated our helplessness to his government. Not that it particularly concerns the good naval attaché; he is merely a spy, gravely borne upon the rolls of his ambassadorial chief and as gravely accepted because in some disguise he is inevitable. His duty is to worm out naval secrets, and our lack of a real navy is no secret. It is a matter of record at every admiralty and chancellery in the world, including, naturally and particularly, those of the Japanese.—Ambrose Bierce, in Everybody's.

DERBY HATS AND BALDNESS. HERE IS in Russia a popular saying. "He is baldheaded as a Senator." Senators in Russia are usually baldheaded. On the other hand, among the millions of Russian peasants it is very unusual to find baldness. A comparison of these two facts led even the physicians to give the intellectual work as one of the causes of baldness, and this notwithstanding the fact that there are a great number of women who are intellectual workers, but who are not baldheaded.

Agrippa, the clergyman of the Russian church, who are forbidden to cut their hair or shave their beards, are blessed with long, luxurious hair, which by its length and thickness will compare favorably with any woman's hair, and the clergyman are intellectual workers, too.

Now, my explanation of this fact is that the Russian peasants and the common people at large wear caps; women, shawls or hats on their heads; the clergyman, only soft hats, with wide brims, while the Senators always wear tall silk hats with tight brims. These tight hats, like derbies, bring about a gradual starvation of the hair follicles.

From these observations I have come to the conclusion that baldness in otherwise healthy men in the prime of life is chiefly due to the wearing of derbies. In America it is especially developed, because young men begin to wear derbies in their teens. The majority wear them all the time, even while they are working in the offices or shops.—Boston Globe.

WHY ENLISTMENTS ARE FEW. N unflattering sign of prosperity is the difficulty United States recruiting officers encounter in persuading desirable young men to enlist in the army and navy. This is now in evidence and shows clearly that the demand for all kinds of labor throughout the country has checked the desire of Young America to wear a uniform, with the assurance of good food, clothes and shelter for three years. Young men already in the ranks and on shipboard are showing an eagerness to be released from their enlistments in order that they may accept more remunerative employment in civil life.

There is opportunity in both branches of the military service for bright, capable recruits to learn trades at which they can earn good wages in various lines of manufacture. In the coast artillery and on shipboard hundreds of men become skilled electricians by being taught the mechanism of the big guns, torpedo plants and regular electric machinery. They get a good start in the new and ever-developing field of electricity, and their services are at a premium when they are released from their military occupation.—Philadelphia Press.

CROPS AND COST OF LIVING. REDUCTIONS of cheaper living, based upon ample crops, must be taken with some caution. We are not confronted by the problem of \$2 wheat, which Mr. Patten probably did not expect when he was predicting it last spring. His prediction served his purpose admirably. Instead of shipping wheat late Chicago and breaking the May market—the sort of thing that has broken nearly every predecessor of Mr. Patten in "bull" operations—the farmers held on to their wheat and waited for that \$2 quotation. Wheat is selling in Chicago for less than a dollar.

Food ought to be, and probably will be, cheaper than it has been lately. But cotton and wool are high and textile prices show no disposition to recede. Most of the prices are rising. Structural steel is not a commodity that the average citizen purchases, but he is affected by its price, and all steel prices are up. Hides are on the free list, but the shoe stores and factories are stocked up with goods purchased before the repeal of the hide duty and prices are not yet coming down. The most important item of expense is rent, and with the growth of population that tends upward, but the extensive building operations all over the country may keep abreast of the demand.—Philadelphia Record.

THINGS TOURISTS DISCOVER. TRAVELING Abroad is really an education for the American. About half one's time in traveling abroad is spent in buying stamps, a writer in the Delineator says. No matter how many I put on a letter I had no faith to believe that it would reach America. I found that I could send a letter with one stamp on it if I paid enough for it, also that I could get a demotion of which it would take twenty. In Cairo I put fifteen sphinxes and pyramids on the front of a letter and five on the back. As for postal cards—imagine asking for one in the Belgian language—Wereidpost-vereieniging!

But it is in a Mahometan country that an American mind needs readjustment. We woke one morning in Constantinople and found our calendar nine days ahead of theirs, our watches seven hours behind and the name of the month Ramadan. The Mahometans seem to live up to their religion in a more definite way than we do, and we soon learned what to expect. The porter would drop one's trunk when the muezzin called to prayer; the sacredness of animal life compelled us to walk around the hundreds of lazy dogs asleep on the sidewalk; we were required to take off our shoes instead of our hats when entering a mosque; women were not allowed to pray because they "have no souls." Friday was the day for Sunday, and a camera was an "evil eye" and could not be carried into any sacred place. Our artist was once charged 20 cents for keeping an evil eye in his room all night.

Before the journey ends the tourist has lost his identity completely. At first he is from "Kalamazoo, Mich.," then from "Michigan," later the "United States," soon the "States," and the writer was once introduced to a gentleman from Tuscany as "the lady from North America."

A Victor's Plata Living. The book which Miss Juliet Bredon has written about her uncle, Sir Robert Hart, the "Grand Old Man of China," for many years in charge of the Imperial Customs Service, is full of characteristic and entertaining stories. Among them is the following: One of the most influential of Sir Robert's Chinese friends was the great Li Hung Chang. The diplomat liked Li's household because of the simplicity he found there—no wearisome courses at dinner, but fish and, perhaps, a dish of chicken with rice. In a large, ornate room, the host sat on a low stool, the guests on the floor in red or white or yellow or red, with much gilt and gorgeous devices. Italian notes are of all sizes, shapes and colors. The smaller bills, five and ten lire, are printed on white paper in pink, blue and carmine lines.

The most striking paper currency in the world is the one-hundred-rouble note of Russia, which is barred from top to bottom with all the colors of the rainbow, blended as when a sun ray passes through a prism. In the center in bold relief is a finely executed vignette in black. The remainder of the engraving on the note is in dark and light brown ink.

The American practice of scattering strands of silk through the paper fiber as a protection against counterfeiting is unique.—Harper's Weekly.

FISH THAT CAN WALK

Climbing Perch Travel Over Land from Water to Water. It may seem absurd to speak of fishes as walking. The flying fish is well known, but its flight looks much like swimming in the air. We naturally think of fishes as living always in the water, as being incapable, in fact, of living anywhere else. Pearson's Weekly says. But nature maintains no hard-and-fast lines of distinction between animal life which belongs to the land and that which belongs to the water. If we can believe the accounts of naturalists, there are fishes that traverse dry land.

A party of English officers were upon one occasion encamped in a certain part of India when their attention was attracted by a rustling sound in the grass and leaves. Investigation showed it to be caused by myriads of little fishes that were passing slowly on. There were hundreds of them moving by using their side and small fins as feet, now upright, now falling down, squirming, bending, rolling over, regaining their finny feet and again passing on.

Wilson Vance's novel of a Cromwellian soldier in old Virginia entitled "Big John Baldeth" is to be brought out in England by the noted Bristol publisher who introduced Hugh Conway, Jerome K. Jerome, Anthony Hope and other novelists of note. Wilson Vance is the father of Louis Joseph Vance, author of "The Brass Bowl."

There will be given to the world this autumn two books about the late Lord Kelvin, one of the really great men of science of the nineteenth century. One is the formal biography by Professor Sir James Thomson and the other is a volume of personal reminiscences written by his sister, Mrs. Kling—who has lately followed her brother into the other world.

Mrs. Velma Swanston Howard has returned to New York from a visit to the celebrated Swedish author, Miss Selma Lagerlof. A new edition of Mrs. Howard's translation of Miss Lagerlof's "Christ Legends" has just been issued. The book is having a success as literature aside from its religious significance. Many of the legends it contains are not to be found in the Bible and have a distinct quaintness and charm of their own.

Harry Delacombe, the author of the "Boy's Book of Airships," has been in the British army and became much interested in the subject on which he writes. He is now a specialist in it and has a personal acquaintance with most of the leading inventors. He has withheld his forthcoming book from the press as long as possible in order to get in the very latest information, and it includes accounts of the Zeppelin dirigible and the Wright, Curtiss, Farman, Bleriot, Antoinette and other aeroplanes as they appeared at the international contests at Reims.

To see ourselves as others see us is always an interesting occupation, and nothing can be more interesting to an American than to know why he is unlike the English and the causes that have made him the energetic, enterprising, active man that he is. In A. Maurice Low's forthcoming book, "The American People," these things are explained and the working of the American mind is carefully analyzed. To be told that American character has been influenced by the Indian or that one reason why we are different from Europeans is because of our "cold waves" is interesting.

Cicely Hamilton, the author of "Marriage as a Trade," frankly admits that she speaks as a spinster. Her claim is that woman's one trade or means of livelihood has been to please man, to marry him if possible, and to do the work that he judges too tiresome or uninteresting to do for himself. The result has been not only that her profession of matrimony has been overcrowded but also that the low grade of woman's wages is due to her lack of interest in her work and regard for it on account of her belief that her only respectable career was the marrying of some good man, or in case that failed in becoming the wife of an unworthy man, Miss Hamilton is an English woman and the author of "Diana of Dobson's."

"Why American women should be, their dresses abroad is more than I can understand," declares Mme. Nordica, the famous prima donna. "No matter how exclusive a shop I go to abroad, I find a score or more of American women buying the best and prettiest designs for their shops in this country. No matter how much care I might take to purchase a dress, on my return to America I should be sure to see the very same model displayed in the window of some shop. Why American women should feel it necessary to have imported gowns at all is more than I can understand. America no longer stands second to London or Paris in designing gowns, for if it does not lead them it is at least their equal. American fashions are second to none in the world."

DO NOT PROLONG CALLS.

Lingering at Meal Times Makes One Unpopular. When paying calls on one's friends, whether formally or informally, do not utterly disregard the hours for meals, for it is not good form to linger until the lunch or the dinner hour when you have not been invited for the meal. If you do, you are likely to place your friend in an awkward position. Either she must ask you to remain because she feels it necessary, or she has the meal delayed waiting for you to take your departure.

Do not put yourself in the position of allowing either of these alternatives to occur, for no housekeeper likes the routine interfered with, and unexpected guests are not apt to be popular, for in all well regulated households the table is as conventionally laid for luncheon as for dinner, and to rearrange it at the last moment necessitates considerable change and special orders for the kitchen. All of which many housekeepers dislike, and therefore do not feel obliged to invite callers at the last moment.

If you are really wanted, you will be asked during the early part of your call, for the hostess who wants you will insist that you take off your hat and stay for a long visit. If she does not ask you in this spontaneous way, do not embarrass her by remaining until the moment the meal is announced.

No well-mannered hostess allows her maid to announce a meal while a caller is present, and if the visitor is thoughtless the lunch or dinner is often delayed until it is almost spoiled, for cooked foods should be eaten as soon as they are done. This waiting is a trial to the housekeeper and a cause of irritation to her husband, if she has one, and the visitor responsible for such a state is never popular in that family.

When you ask guests to a meal, if one of them is late, do not wait more than ten minutes. At the expiration of that time the meal should be served. This is only fair to your punctual guests, who deserve to have a good dinner, and not one that has been spoiled by standing. In order to get their guests together at just the right time some hostesses resort to the subterfuge of naming a dinner hour half an hour earlier, than they mean to have the meal served. This retards the guests one there on time, but it is not quite fair to the punctual ones, who are kept waiting. That old adage, "Punctuality is the courtesy of kings," should be observed by everyone.—Washington Post.

ELEVEN DAYS IN THE BUSH. W. D. Pittcan, in his "Two Years Among the Savages of New Guinea," relates an adventure which befell a friend of his, Bob Sanderson, in north Queensland. This friend, who was a man of good education and an expert in search of new country adapted to stock raising, was on an expedition with a party of men with tents and all necessary provisions for the journey. After traveling about four hundred miles they found a good looking country, and pitched their camp. Mr. Sanderson wandered some distance from his party, and on returning at nightfall, found the place deserted. His followers had struck their tents and made off.

He was four hundred miles from civilization, alone in the pathless bush, the home of wild and treacherous blacks, without a morsel of food, and with no weapon but a revolver. There was nothing for it but to face the inevitable, and he started on his long journey.

Day after day he plodded wearily along, without any covering at night except the trees, finding here and there a few berries, and often suffering horribly from hunger and thirst. One morning at sunrise he was descending a slope, when to his dismay, about fifty yards below him, he saw a large camp of blacks. One of them had just risen, and was stretching himself directly in the face of the white man.

This was a moment to test the stuff of a man already reduced by days of continuous tramping and starvation. But Sanderson did not hesitate. With piercing shouts he rushed down upon the camp, firing his revolver as he ran. The blacks took it for granted that he had a large force at his back, and immediately broke in confusion and fled across the river.

For several days longer the man struggled on. Then on the eleventh day he sank to the ground, quite unable to go farther. Happy he was now near a cattle station, and a stockman who was out riding stumbled upon him. He was taken into the house and every attention was bestowed upon him, and eventually he recovered his health and strength.

Book News and Reviews

ELEVEN DAYS IN THE BUSH.