

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS

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

Samuel Langhorne Clemens is dead. Mark Twain will live forever.

Girls' names written on eggs are turned out of cold storage from one to three years old.

The man that wore his affinity's name in his hat band evidently had something on his mind.

Paris enthusiasts who are planning to prevent the slaughter of African fauna are a year too slow.

It is not the size of woman's hat so much as the cost of it that worries the man who pays the bill.

There is said to be a \$5,000 government job in New York that nobody seems to want. It must be haunted.

No fight against the hat pin will gain enough of a victory to send feminine fashions back to bonnet strings.

If that London bank for women desires to win a big success it should make a specialty of 99-cent and \$1.98 deposits.

An elevator has been installed in St. Peter's at Rome. Will somebody now please give the Sphinx an extension telephone?

Any man who loves his country should be willing to eat out of the government cook book without grumbling about it.

"Tom" Walsh left an estate worth \$3,500,000, which is pretty good for one who once drove a mule team on the Erie canal.

Now science has achieved an invention to take the picture of beating hearts. This ought to make effective exhibits in love pleadings.

Economists who declare there is now too much gold will not exert any noticeable influence on the enthusiasm of the man with a mining prospect.

The Duke of Manchester says the suffragette movement in England is a "fizzle." Just wait till some of the robust ones get after his Grace and see what happens to him.

As a matter of fact man is not in rebellion against buttoning up his wife's waist in the back. He likes anything that proves he is a convenience about the house.

If a working man, while intoxicated suffers injury in a workshop in France he may not recover damages from his employer. The French courts hold that drunkenness is inexcusable and constitutes contributory negligence. Such an interpretation of the law produces good results.

The law against expectation in public places should be impartially and steadily enforced. The present fight against the "white death" has brought its dangers fully to the public understanding, and those who will not give up their unsanitary and offensive habit of their own will should be made to do so for the benefit of others.

Nothing daunts the enthusiastic naturalist, and no one else has such sharp eyes as he. A New Yorker who has little time to go to the country to see the wild life states that even a stay-at-home can find enough to talk about. Within the city limits the following animals have been observed: a hermit-thrush, a heron, an eagle, a screech-owl, a fox, a white-tailed deer and a mink. This was, it should be added, exclusive of the Central Park menagerie.

After the ice is once broken anybody is free to jump in. The question of a large or a small family was once regarded by many as a personal concern; but since our late chief executive opened the subject everybody has felt free to pursue it. Among recent handlers of the topic is Mrs. Catherine Waugh McCulloch of Evanston, Ill. Mrs. McCulloch voices a growing sentiment in declaring that the careless rearing of a large family is less to be desired than the careful rearing of a small one. Fewer and better children would be her idea. She would welcome forethought and a reasonable apprehension of the general condition governing our day. This argument doubtless has validity within the bounds of any single country, separately considered. But the modern world is composed largely of some eight or ten dominant national units which are in competition with one another. In such circumstances numbers count. The brute force derived from bulk and mass is a prime element in national success. A people of forty millions, however happy at home, cannot successfully withstand a population of sixty millions, however the latter may be embarrassed by over-population and discontent. A patriotic population will endeavor to multiply itself. Its members, taking a hint from Anatole France, will not be unwilling to contribute through their private misery to the public good. One exception may be made: A country which enjoys the hearty cooperation of multitudinous newcomers. Such a fortunate land may properly aspire to quality as well as quantity and reasonably hope to compass both. We trust Mrs. McCulloch and Mr. Roosevelt will find here good ground for a compromise.

A pathetic story of Mark Twain's life points the familiar moral that the American sense of humor is over-developed. As a people we are so afraid of losing the point of a joke that we hasten to laugh at grave or even tragic things when presented in a new aspect. It is a story as old as history that discoverers in science or prophets in religion are received at first with neglect and mockery. Americans go a step farther and profess to find food for the comic spirit

In the first presentation of moral or social discoveries. They pervert the old Roman proverb into the notion that everything that is new must be funny. Darwin was despised and rejected in England, but it was reserved for Americans to turn his theory of descent of the primates from a remote common ancestor into the ridiculous idea that the monkey is the direct ancestor of man. After this we need not be surprised when the first rational theory of the development of the Superman, however imperfectly conceived and presented, is greeted with ribald laughter and perverted to a scheme of government of the world by oriental soprani. Mark Twain, unscrupulous inventor as well as humorous writer. He was a better earner than husband of money. Doubtful investments allured him and his royalties melted like April snows. Then his mind turned to inventions like his successful scrap book and abortive hatpin. The latter was a simple spiral which could not fall out or be stolen, and he tried to interest Wall Street in it when he was in financial difficulties. In spite of half a day's demonstration with a model pin and an imitation coiffure, the street insisted that he was joking and sent him back to his creditors with shouts of laughter. That is a common fate of discoverers in all times.

RINDY'S WEDDING TRIP.

When Philip Lee married pretty, inexperienced little Isabel Watts, his mother made noteworthy sacrifice for their happiness by transferring to the kitchen of the young couple Aunt Rindy, who had prepared the Lee food for a generation. But possibly even discerning Mrs. Lee did not then know the full value of the treasure she relinquished.

Aunt Rindy at once took "them chilluns" affairs into her motherly back hands. Even when an autumnal happiness entered her own life, she did not overlook "Miss Belle" and "Mistah Phil"; she put endless tender forethought into her preparations for their comfort during the week of her own absence on her wedding trip, when her young mistress was to make her first attempt at housekeeping.

After putting the whole house in exquisite order Aunt Rindy late in the day the evening of which was to see her wedded to "Uncle Jerry," departed, tired but happy, carefully carrying her wedding gown, a gift from "them chilluns," done up in a clean sheet.

On the following morning young Mrs. Lee, descending to the kitchen, started back in dismay.

"Why, Aunt Rindy!" she gasped. "Didn't you get married to Uncle Jerry?"

"Deed I did, Miss Belle!" Rindy turned a beaming face from the coffee. "We jes' had the gran'est wedding!"

"But your wedding trip—" "Now don't you say nothing mo, honey! My when I gotted thinking 'bout you 'buning yore little fingers round the hot stove, an' Mistah Phil eating mo' anything er nothing, 'til I fob a whole week, an' me galavantiing round—w-y, I jes' couldn't do it."

"Cose, Jerry hn was sot on that trip, an' he made a fuss. But I says, 'La, Jerry, honey, here's that snap shot Mistah Phil took er me on the back veranday, peelin' taters—yoh kin jes' take that along, an' folks in yore ole town'll know jes' how Rindy looks.'"

"So I packed up his ole's all nice, honey, an' he went early this morning, happy's a jay-bird, on the wedding trip. When yoh done come in now, Miss Belle,—"Rindy's face seemed actually transfigured—"I was jes' kinder 'magineing Jerry setting up in the caha, looking out the window."

"La, honey, seems lak I'm getting mo' too much happiness, enjoyin' that there honeymoon erlong with Jerry, an' staying right here all time, taking keer o' yoh-all, same lak I've ailsahs done."—Youth's Companion.

Discovered by Accident. All forms of bituminous pavements, whether manufactured from natural or artificial asphalt, are in fact artificial stone pavements. The industry started with the use of the natural rock asphalt from the mines in the Val de Travers, Canton Neuchatel, Switzerland. The mines were discovered in 1721, but it was in 1849 that its utility as a road covering was first noticed.

The rock was then being mixed for the purpose of extracting the bitumen contained in it for use in medicine and arts. It is a limestone found impregnated with bitumen, of which it yields on analysis from 8 to 14 per cent.

It was observed that pieces of rock which fell from the wagon were crushed by the weight of wheels, and under the combined influence of the traffic and heat of the sun a good road surface was produced. A macadam road of asphalt rock was then made which gave very good results, and finally in 1854 a portion of the Rue Bergere was laid in Paris of compressed asphalt on a concrete foundation. In 1858 a still larger sample was laid, and from that time it has been laid year by year in Paris. From Paris it extended to London, being laid on Threadneedle street in 1869 and Chapselde in 1870 and in successive years on other streets, and then its use in street and road making extended to other countries.

Going Home. Inebriated One—Shay, misther, did you sike me beat out that friend of mine? Stranger—I saw you running down the street, but I didn't observe any competitor. Inebriated One—You didn't? Why, I went by that lamp-post back there if it was standing still!—Fuck.

Nipped. "I've got a great chance," began Burroughs, "to make big money on a certain investment of—"

"Sorry, old man," interrupted Wise, "but I've had to borrow myself this month."—Catholic Standard and Times.

No man ever loses every hair on his head. Death always arrives in time to spare him that affliction.

Too many old people are imposed upon by young and vigorous kin

Editorials

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

USE FOR OBSOLETE BATTLESHIPS.

PLAN for the fortification of Key West, lately presented by a naval officer in a service publication, contains an interesting suggestion for the practical use of obsolete battleships in coast defenses. It is well known that a modern battleship deteriorates every year by comparative loss of speed and mobility, without losing power for offense or defense.

After from ten to twenty years ships as powerful and impregnable as ever have to be withdrawn from the fighting line because they cannot keep up with newer models in speed or agility. Yet if these ships could fight at anchor, like the French fleet at the battle of the Nile, they would be nearly as effective as ever. The suggestion we have referred to is that they should fight at permanent anchor. The strategic position of Key West is so important that it should be made an American Gibraltar to guard the Gulf and Caribbean sea as that famous rock guards the Mediterranean. But Key West is a low coral island, surrounded by deep lagoons and coral reefs almost wash. The defenses of the main island have so little command that outworks are necessary for complete security.

It is proposed to obtain such outworks at a cheap rate by stationing the old monitors in shallow water on these outer reefs and imbedded each solidly in earthwork protected by ripraping. That will make of each useless war vessel a stationary fort armed with two or four 10 or 12-inch guns in turrets. It is further suggested that when our older battleships, from the Oregon class down to those just before the Dreadnought class, become obsolete for mobile service at sea, they can be made cheaply and effectively useful by imbedding them in artificial islands in shallow water off harbors of a slow and difficult approach, like those of New York and Hampton Roads. This would give to each long life as a stationary fort after it had outlived its usefulness as a mobile battleship.—Farmers' Dispatch.

THE OLD AMERICA.

IN THE year 1850, about the time that Charles Dickens was engaged in his dypnetic tour of America, G. P. R. James, another English novelist, was an American visitor, and wrote a letter, sold at auction in New York last week. It is a document of interest to those outside the glorious company of autograph collectors. Wrote James when at New Haven:

"In passing through this land one sees no poverty, no squalid wretchedness, no hovels and old huts. Great good humor, too, is visible everywhere among the people; each man seems to feel that by industry he can get on as well as another. There is little of that jealous rivalry, none of that irritable envy that we see in other lands, where we are all struggling for that bread which is not sufficient for the whole."

Here is an echo of the old America. Great good humor prevalent, a minimum of jealous rivalry and ir-

A REAL COMPLIMENT.

It is not often that an author may listen to a perfectly sincere tribute to his work, one which he may be sure is not influenced either by friendship or courtesy. W. B. Woodgate, however, in his "Reminiscences of an Old Sportsman," tells how he paid such a compliment at a dinner at the Garrick Club in London.

"The company were all comparing notes as to leading dramatic and literary feats, and my opinion as to novels was asked.

"As nearly as I can remember, I said, 'You will laugh if I mention a novel that probably none of you ever read, and by a man named Jefferson, whom perhaps you never heard of, but which to my untrained mind has always struck me as head and shoulders over ninety-nine out of a hundred: a book called, 'Live It Down.' The third volume especially is to my mind unsurpassed for denouement of plot and sketch of character.'"

Such was my speech, delivered slowly and deliberately:

There was a strained silence in the room as I concluded. Then some one asked, solemnly and pointedly:

"Is that meant for a jest, Mr. Woodgate?"

"Jest! Why? Not at all. I read the book in my Oxford days, but have never forgotten and have more than once reread it, and hold to what I say, though I do not claim to be a judge of such matters.

"Perhaps you are not aware, then, that Mr. Jefferson is sitting beside you?"

I was taken aback, and looked at my right-hand neighbor.

"The other side," I was instructed; and I faced the left-hand guest, with whom I had been having much interesting conversation.

Cordy Jefferson smiled benignly as I stammered apologies for my personality in defining him as "probably unknown." Of course I was aware that a writer of that name had written "The Real Lord Byron," and had a high literary status, but had no idea that he was identical with the author of the novel in question.

He took the episode good-humoredly, and vowed that it was a genuine compliment to him. He had written the novel, he said, in his youth, and then had settled to more serious literature.

INTERESTING VOLUMES.

The Largest, the Smallest and the Most Expensive Book Published. The largest bound book ever made was owned by Queen Victoria, says the New York Sun. It weighs six hundred and thirty-three pounds and is eighteen inches thick.

For the Hebrew Bible in the Vatican in 1512 the Jews offered Pope Julius II. its weight in gold—\$100,000; but the pope would not part with it.

More expensive even, if not more valuable, is the official history of the United States government at a cost of nearly \$3,000,000. Nearly one-half of this amount was paid for printing and binding and the rest for salaries, rent, stationery and such expenses as

table envy, general belief that a kind Providence had called the people of this land to dwell in a pretty good place. Would an English novelist visiting America now so write?

Yet if Americans to-day were called on to occupy the houses that satisfied in 1850 they would deem themselves ill used. In New Haven wages are nominally four times higher than sixty years ago, and measure in purchasing power twice as high. The average American stomach is filled with more and better food, and the average American back is covered with finer raiment.

It is the spirit rather than that with which the spirit exercises itself which has changed for the worse. It is now almost unfashionable to praise America, as for merly it was deemed unpatriotic to have any doubts. Jefferson Brick was a most ridiculous person, but when he disappeared something of great value tended to go out of American life.—New York Globe.

BUCKET SHOPS.

MAINTAINING a stock-gambling office—by other words, a bucket-shop—is an offense against the United States laws. A bucket-shop is a place where men make bets that the price of a stock will rise or fall by offering to buy so many shares at such a price, or offering to sell a similar amount of the stock or of selling it; but the forms of such legitimate business transactions are observed, and innocent people who desire to invest their money are thereby duped into doing business with such places. They usually lose all the money they invest.

The Attorney General has lately secured indictments against a group of men who have maintained 250 such gambling offices in various parts of the country, and he has announced his purpose to prosecute them to the full extent of the law. It is confidently expected that he will succeed in stopping their business as his predecessors under other laws stopped the Louisiana lottery. When the power of the national government is directed against any such evil as these it is much more effective than when a single State or a single city attempts to purge itself of offenders against the law.

The extent to which the bucket-shop business has been developed is almost incredible, and the machinery devised for entrapping the unwary is shrewdly constructed. Not only did the bucket-shop operators do their business, nominally as "stock brokers," but they maintained an organized stock exchange, on which enough legitimate business was done to make a showing of honesty and fair dealing.

But the chief patrons of these places were nothing but gamblers. They did not want to buy or sell anything, any more than does the man who bets on which lump of sugar a fly will next light. The proprietors of the places allowed their patrons to win only enough to keep them interested, but by a system of secret wires secured advance information from the legitimate stock exchanges which enabled them to prevent any customer from forcing them to lose.—Youth's Companion.

THE OLD POISONED ARROW.

The famous poisoned arrow of the Africain savage is not always so deadly a weapon as it sounds. In fact, it may be absolutely harmless. After having killed an old buffalo bull near the Ngari Kili swamp, says E. B. Bronson in his recent book, "In Closed Territory," he noticed a small black shaft about the diameter of a slate-pencil standing perpendicularly out of the animal's right loin, near the spine, and six inches in front of the hip. One of the natives said, with a laugh, "Other hunters have been out long before you, Bwana, but your rears (cartridge) was not as good as yours; that is a Wanderoboo poisoned arrow."

It was true, as we found proved, when after five minutes' cutting and tugging, the arrow-head was withdrawn from the bull's tough back muscles.

It was a remarkable example of the great power of the Wanderoboo bow. From its sharply barbed point to its base the arrow-head was five and a half inches long, and four and a half inches of its length had been driven through the half-inch hide and on into the heavy muscles of the loin.

Since it stood perpendicularly in the loin, it must have been shot into the bull while he was passing beneath a tree, or when he was drinking directly below some overhanging bank, both methods of attack favorites of the light-armed Wanderoboo.

While the Wanderoboo poison is deadly to beasts within five to twenty minutes when it is fresh, applied to arrow-heads in this dry climate, it cures to the hardness of enamel in a few weeks and becomes harmless. Luckily for the old bull, it was evidently such an old disvenomed arrow that had, perhaps by mistake, or as the last in the quiver, been driven into him.

The poison is made from the bark of a bush much like a laurel, which is boiled down and down until it becomes a thick, gummy, concentrated extract. So prepared, it is thickly smeared over the barbed head and

three or four inches of the shank or shaft.

How the plant is known botanically, or whether it is known at all, I am unaware, but it bears a purple fruit, quite the shape and about the size of a small olive, which I understand is not itself poisonous.

So armed, the Wanderoboo tackle and kill anything, from the tiniest buck up to elephant, their favorite tactics a silent shot from a brush shelter built within five or ten yards of a much-used watering-place. Such primitive shooting covers one sees daily above springs and along streams in mountains and plains of the Wanderoboo country.

This particular arrow-head the old bull carried would plainly have gone much deeper had it not struck a rib, as for asound, the thin head was bent almost to right angles with its shank by contact with bone.

That it was a very old wound was obvious, for not only had it entirely healed, except local irritation about the head, but in places where the hard black enamel-like coating of the poison was worn away the shank was much rusted.

A Duck Hard to Kill. The screaming wallow is a hard duck to kill. Its hide is very tough and is thickly covered with feathers and down. Besides, the bird is a great diver, one of the kind that used to "dive at the flash" when hunted with the old arm that flashed when fired. It is of very little value for table use, being so tough. The only way to manage it at all is to skin it and parboil it in a big pot with plenty of water. The negroes make caps of wallow skins.

"They are great ducks for diving," says a well known Tron Avon river progger. "They can dive quicker, go deeper, remain under water longer and come up farther away than any other duck that frequents our waters. I remember once I succeeded in killing a wallow, and, being short of game for the table, I determined to cook my bird. I got a negro to skin it, giving him the hide for his trouble. After being cleaned we put it in a great pot full of water and under it kindled a hot fire. After awhile I wanted to see how the cooking of my duck progressed and lifted the top of the boiling pot, but there was so much steam escaping I could not see into the pot and struck a match over it. The blamed wallow, sir, dived at the flash of the match. It disappeared and has never been seen since."—Baltimore Sun.

Fractional Poetry. "Pa, here's a piece of poetry that says something about a 'moated grange.' What is a 'moated grange,' pa?"

"Lemme look at it. I guess that must be a misprint for 'garage.' A moated garage is one that's designed for motors. That's it.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Little White—Pa, what does this paper mean by saying it was a fruitless search?

Father—It probably applies, my son, to the quest of some man who was looking for pineapples on a pine tree.—Chicago News.

THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

Only 8 1/2 per cent of the total area of the world is tillable. The mines of Butte, Mont., have a combined pay roll of \$3,000,000 a year.

The Argentine Legislature is considering the construction of underground railways for Buenos Ayres. It is just being realized that the Trans-Siberian Railroad was a poor job from an engineering standpoint.

The observed rate for the sound of "a" in "great" is 450, and for the sound of "a" in "ma," 770 waves a second.

The telephone and telegraph wires of the United States would encircle the earth at the equator more than 600 times.

To prevent the alteration of checks or other valuable papers an inventive genius has brought out an electric apparatus which burns tiny holes in the paper as the inscription is written.

Electricity has at last been applied to the Teddy bear, a Maryland man having patented one that opens its jaws and flashes lights from its eyes, nose and mouth, when a battery in its interior is pressed.

The work on the Jungfrau Railway is progressing so rapidly that it will probably be opened next year to Jungfrau Joch, where a station and hotel accommodating 300 persons have been hewn out of the solid rock.

Though hydrophobia has been stamped out of Britain, it is still rampant in Germany, where every year over 1,500 dogs and cats afflicted with the disease are destroyed.

A patent on a horsehoe designed to prevent the stumbling of horses was granted in Panama four years ago.

FASHION HINTS



One of the prettiest models for a dainty little afternoon gown of batiste, is shown above. The wee yoke is of fine ecru lace, the batiste being of that color, and there's just a touch of light blue in the embroidery.

"A Mite Too Frying." Bushby had many natural advantages and beauties, but Mrs. Abner Crane, who was a brief sojourner in the place, having been there only a matter of ten years or so, never appreciated it. "She was aching to get back to Nashby the whole enduring time," said one of Mrs. Crane's Bushby neighbors, "and I was glad to see her go, feeling as she did."

"What was it she didn't like about Bushby?" asked one of the summer residents, curiously. "She said she 'didn't get the news of the day quick enough to suit her,'" quoted the neighbor, with as near an imitation of Mrs. Crane's air as she could manage.

"As I said to my Asy, what on earth she wanted more than we have in the way o' news-spreaders here, I don't know.

"When you consider that there are five telephones in town, a grocery wagon driven by Lucy Grant's boy twice a week, Lucy Grant herself to sew for everybody in town by the day, and all taking milk from Jed Kimball, I don't know how we could be any better fixed. I call anybody that wants more news 's the day than Bushby folks get a mite too prying myself."

Gladdening His Heart. "Dear papa," wrote the little girl at the summer resort, "I have gained six ounces in weight since we came here. Mamma sends her love. Please write to us to-morrow. Send your love and all the money you can spare."—Chicago Tribune.

While the Sparrow Cap Looked On. Ardy Kemp—"Why don't ye roll furder along under de tree, an' git out o' de sunshin'?" Solon Bo—"Too blame much like work."

Nothing New. "Has your wife found a house yet?" "No. You see, we've moved so often in the last ten years that it's almost impossible for her to find a place with some improvement that we haven't had at one time or another."—Detroit Free Press.

Objection Sustained. Judge—The witness told all that happened on the second floor. Now, why do you object to his telling what happened on the third floor? Counsel—Because, if it please your honor, that is another story.—Brooklyn Eagle.

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