

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Of the building of Carnegie libraries it would appear that there is no end.

American Mormons are reported making many conversions in Europe. Assimilation, as it were.

Arrangements should be made to hide the cup. Lord Dunraven threatens to come over again and try for it.

Admiral Dewey was only used to contests with guns or swords. Naturally, Cupid's arrows were too much for him.

Should it be true more birds' wings than ever are worn as millinery. It's only a feather in the hats of the ladies one way.

There is some hope for the nobility of England. Two members have gone to work—one as an actor and the other as a newspaper man.

It will be noticed that the countries with the biggest coal piles—Britain and America—are the great manufacturing nations of the earth.

If it is true that no man is a hero to his wife, Admiral Dewey has reduced the number of his ardent admirers by entering the marriage state.

For that matter it only adds insult to injury to say that a Chinaman who had his queue cut off should go to one of the retailing stores in Chinatown.

It's not known whether the porter will try to work a compromise in that effort to abolish tips on railroads. But as a principle he believes in give and take.

The discovery of men who court, wed and swindle numerous women are becoming quite frequent. So long as women will rush into marriage with strangers this form of fraud will continue.

The heirs of the author of David Harum have been paid \$12,000 in royalty on the book. That's nothing. Jeffries got \$50,000 for an hour and a half's job.

A gay Lothario pledged his truth with two widows and made matrimonial dates with them both at the same place and hour. They waited in vain. Probably he believed misery loves company.

As has been suspected all along, the "kissing bug" nonsense that spread over the country last summer was started by a couple of yellow newspapers in the East. The men who invented the story have confessed.

There will be quite a saving of time and ink in writing the number of next year in Roman numerals. It will be MCM. This year is MDCCCXCIX, and even that does not take so many letters as 1898—MDCCCLXXXVIII—the most literary year, if we may so put it, in two millennia.

The completion of a telephone line 1,700 miles long and reaching from Detroit to Houston in Texas should prove a great public convenience. By going to Detroit anyone having a row on with a Texan can tell the latter just what he thinks of him with satisfaction and safety.

The armored train is an element of strength to the force that controls it and at the same time it is a ticklish thing to run and to trust to, for it would take but little to throw it off the rails or to blow it into the air with dynamite or other explosive, in either event spreading carnage among its occupants. Then again, it is both a gain and a detriment to the army which depends upon it, inasmuch as while it makes an almost impregnable cover for the soldiers, its frequent use soon renders these soldiers very poor fighters in the open.

A Berlin paper says that "the Americans begin earnestly to think of the political and economical annexation of South America." Another German newspaper says that "the suspicious doings of the Americans" in South America "should be watched carefully." The London Saturday Review, a consistent hater of America and all things American, asserts that "the dream of the far-seeing American to-day is South America for the North Americans." All of which is as amusing as the funniest "piece" in the funniest of the comic papers. We never met an American who would have this country take the whole or any part of South America as a gift. Did you?

After a review of the origin of that penal institution a writer in La Revue de Paris gives the number of exiles sent from Russia to Siberia. There were 100,000 from 1754 to 1814, 415,000 from 1814 to 1858, and 132,000 from 1858 to 1898. He states that the system has given Siberia a proletarian that lives in mendacity, vagabondage, and crime.

Transportation gives little correction to the criminals and exerts no civilizing influence on Siberia, nor does it add to the security of society. That has been officially admitted by the Czar's government by the decree of May 18, 1896, which adopted the principle that transportation to Siberia should be limited, and established a commission to devise a way of encouraging a profitable colonization for Siberia. Siberia is not the sterile region that the novelist and dramatist picture it. The land can nourish 50,000,000 men, and free

colonization might perhaps bring about that "blossoming like the rose" which penal colonization is unable to effect.

In the Cornhill Mr. Paget gives an account of the early rising habits of the Imperial court of China. "At 2 a. m. every morning the halls of audience are opened, and at 3 a. m. the cabinet councils are held." "The court entertainments take place at 8 a. m. and at 10 a. m. the work of the Emperor's day is over." The British Medical Journal, commenting on this, states that the habit of early rising which is regarded by so many elderly people as a virtue is in reality to be traced to physical and not to moral causes. "To be drowsy in the evening and wakeful in the early morning is rather characteristic of age and is probably to be attributed to the hardening of the arteries and the less ready action of the vaso-motor system." This sign of degeneration is crystallized as a characteristic of the body politic in China.

Bicycle enthusiasm, which reached its highest mark in 1896 and 1897, is now distinctly on the decline. It was predicted then—and the universal favor with which the wheel was regarded justified the belief—that it would continue to grow in favor and become an established institution. Within certain limits it will undoubtedly do so. It is not now the exciting and absolute fashion, and hence loses that great demand. It has fallen to the prosaic place of a practical convenience and utility. The enthusiasm of fashionable rivalry has vanished and as a measure of recreation its use has largely fallen away. It has been found that the wheel has its inconveniences and dangers, and is not altogether the health promoter that was urged at one time. Still it remains for many thousands, and possibly hundreds of thousands, an inspiring and profitable exercise. But the novelty has worn off, the fashion craze has gone and the wheel is simply regarded from a practical standpoint with a legitimate and limited demand.

When it comes to averaging the number of crimes committed by men and women, the statistician demonstrates pretty clearly that the men are much worse than the women. Some modern sociologists have ventured to assert that the women were quite the equal of men in the field of criminality, but this appears to be a mistaken idea. Prof. Montegazza has made a study of this matter and gives his conclusions in an article published by the Humanitarian. His statistics are quite elaborate and equally as convincing, showing plainly that women occupy a higher plane of morals than that held by the men. As these statistics are of unusual interest, covering a question much mooted just at present, some of them are given here, as follows:

Man hurls false witness 100 times to a woman's seventeen. Man forgers and counterfeit coinage was convicted 100 times to a woman's eleven. In France women are summoned before the tribunals four times less than men. In France in 1880 women delinquents were fourteen to 100 men. In Italy in the same year they were only 9 per cent.

In England and Wales between 1834 and 1842 there were twenty-four women to 100 men, all for the more serious offenses. In 1871 Dr. Nicholson found in the prisons in England 8,218 men and 1,217 women. In Bavaria from 1862 to 1896, in a population consisting solely of peasants, the women who were condemned were in proportion twenty-nine to 100 men. In the prisons of Turin from 1871 to 1884 the women in respect to men are represented by a figure of 13.47 per cent.

These statistics show that, taking the whole of Europe, the men are five times more guilty than the women. There is a lack of information concerning the relative morality of men and women in the United States, but it is safe to say the men, when compared with the women, will be found to be a pretty bad lot of fellows.

Irving's View of the Stage To-day. "The greatest marked development in the theater in the last twenty-five years," said Sir Henry Irving slowly, and in that strikingly measured manner, "is that it is no longer necessary to vindicate the stage. There was a time when it was. Another great change, and one that has helped the actor immensely is the growth in the number of strong, honest and capable critics. The actor must have publicity and honest criticism, and, in proportion as he gets that, the necessity for 'vindication' ceases. He then takes his place according to his merit, that is, he takes his place in his time. But an actor is never sure what another time will think of him. An actor's rewards are peculiar. I think it was Mr. Archer who said that beautiful pictures, statues and fine buildings, no matter how much you admire them, never cause you to throw up your hat or applaud very vigorously. In walking through an art collection you simply make a pencil mark alongside of the name of the pictures that please you. The methods of expressing approval of acting are stronger, but the thing that produces the approval has passed away with its creation."—Ainslie's.

Annual Rainfall of Nearly Forty Feet. The heaviest rainfalls so far observed with scientific accuracy occur in India. At Cherrapunji, in the Khasi Hills, in Assam, the mean annual precipitation is 30 feet 4 inches, at Debandja 30 feet 10 inches, and at Bibundia 34 feet 4 inches. Both the latter stations are on the sea coast and at a much lower level than Cherrapunji. What a jolly old world this would be if others could only see us through our eyes.

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