

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

One good point to observe in carrying guns when hunting is to point them the other way.

Lots of those who go shooting are not particular about big game-bags. They're satisfied to just kill time.

At the same time it's hard to see how there can be an exclusive coffin trust since everybody will be in it sooner or later.

Maybe the pen is mightier than the sword, but when it comes to making war news neither is it with the censor's pencil.

This country may also start on a career of discovery in the Pacific, but it won't pay to lose a warship every time we hit on an unknown rock.

That female college movement to make Saturn the planet of love instead of Venus is all right. Saturn represents a man and is accompanied by two rings.

There are some things science can't accomplish. When it comes to the transmission of news one able-bodied censor can beat all the systems of telegraphy ever invented.

If it is a choice between red noses and veils and no red noses and no veils, which will win? A short time ago red noses in women were attributed to tight lacing, and the discovery, or alleged discovery, resulted in no reform.

The voting machine has been experimented with at the recent elections in many places, and from reports it would seem that it has given general satisfaction. There were no errors in the count, and there were no mutilated ballots, no mistakes in marking, and no loss of time in counting. When the last vote was cast the machine was ready to announce the total vote, and from that announcement there was no appeal and no recount was necessary.

The omnipresent microbe is making its disturbing influence felt in strange and unexpected quarters. Beards and mustaches are placed under ban as being nesting places of errant intruders, some of them pathogenic, or, in every-day parlance, having the power to produce disease. Because of this, the London Graphic states, on the authority of a French scientific journal, that on motion of the celebrated Dr. Hubenack, of Breslau, the leading surgeons of Austria and Germany are considering the adopting of a rule requiring surgeons to be clean-shaven, or, at least, as a preventive of danger, disinfect the hair of the face before operating. Nothing is said as to the hair of the head, but if this, too, is included in the interdiction, bald-headed surgeons will enjoy a baffling advantage.

An Italian countess has given her extensive estates to a hygienic society in that kingdom on condition that a hospital for consumptives be built on them. The act of philanthropy is an incident in the world movement to do more than ever for persons threatened with the terrible malady, or actually in its deadly grasp. The methods of prevention and of aid rob the disease of some of its power to destroy, and promise larger gains in the saving work. "Resist the beginnings" is a motto which has peculiar force in dealing with phthisis; while the latter theory, justified by scientific investigation, that a degree of isolation will prevent the spread of the infection, is a reinforcement to medication and other healing measures. The old fatalism, which expressed itself in folded hands and a despairing heart, when consumption knocked at the door, is dying out.

Among the many contributing causes of accidental loss of life one of the most needless and least excusable is the grade crossing. In the first place, there is no excuse for the existence of the grade crossing in a large city, and that city which tolerates the evil may be justly considered behind the times and unprogressive along the lines that make for the safety and protection of the lives of its citizens. In the next place, where grade crossings are permitted the safeguards against loss of life should be made so thorough and so effective as practically to preclude the possibility of accident. Where street cars pass over the grade crossings traversed by fast express trains special precautions against accidents should be taken, and when they prove defective or insufficient the penalties exacted, whether from the municipality or from the railroad corporations, should be the heaviest prescribed by law.

After centuries of spendthrift abuse of the riches which nature bestowed upon the United States in the form of forests the signs are multiplying that the care of trees, their preservation and the widening of forest areas in sections where there is less than a proper proportion of woods will soon be given something like their rightful share of attention by the American people. Forestry had a distant and indifferent sound in American ears not long ago. Now it is deemed a worthy subject of government care and private study. The forestry division of the department of agriculture is publishing some very interesting and attractive books on the subject of tree culture. It is also giving individual advice and assistance, as far as its means permit, to those land-

owners interested in the care and improvement of forests and the planting of trees. It is receiving many proofs of increased appreciation of what the forests of the United States are worth to the country and of what may be done to improve and extend them.

The Berlin Tageblatt recently printed a dispatch from St. Petersburg setting forth that Russia has planned two railway lines through Persia. The first will run southward from Merv, in Turkestan, a station on the line of the Transcaspian road. An extension from Merv has already been built to Kushk, 250 miles south, and across the border of Afghanistan. This is being advanced to Herat, capital of Afghanistan, and concessions have been secured from the Persian government for an extension southwest to the Persian Gulf. The second project is for a line running southeast from the Caucasus to Ertivan and thence to Teheran and Isfahan. The enterprise of Russia in pushing forward these lines is not inspired simply by commercial considerations. The main object is to have an independent military route to the Indian Ocean, and these lines once constructed it will be able to push troops rapidly forward from the Black and Caspian Seas. With the completion of the great Transiberian line Russia in the future is likely to become the dominating power in Asia.

Ever since the framing of the Constitution the question has, from time to time, recurred as to the value to the country of the office of Vice President. For periods aggregating thirty years of our national life the Vice Presidency has been vacant without affecting the efficiency of the executive arm. At first the position was treated with especial reverence to its providing a successor to the President in case of need. Vice Presidents were chosen in view of that contingency. They were younger than the Presidential candidate, and every whit as important as he. But for at least a quarter century back this policy has been completely changed. Nomination to the office of Vice President became a means of placating a disgruntled faction of the party, or of recognizing some locality important in national affairs. In this way it can easily happen that the President would be succeeded by an inferior man and a man holding opinions quite different from his own. On the other hand, without a Vice President and with the law which places the line of succession in the Cabinet, the heir to the Presidency would be sure to be of the President's mind, because he would be the President's nominee. The Cabinet is an extension of the President's personality, and the passage of the executive power to the Secretary of State might be expected to be of the smoothest. The Vice President's only real use lies in his making a presiding officer for the Senate. When a member of the Senate is elevated to the chair his consequent loss of power for other than a casting vote virtually deprives his State of one of its Senators.

Whittier at Home. The first installment of a series of letters that passed between Whittier and Gail Hamilton is published for the first time in the Ladies' Home Journal. In one letter (written, however, to a friend) Gail Hamilton gives this interesting glimpse of Whittier at home: "Imagine Whittier and me sitting together one whole day and two evenings, talking all the time and then repeating it. One of the brass knobs on the Franklin stove was loose and came off in my hand. I turned it over and remarked upon its brightness. He said, 'Now doesn't this know that there is making work?' 'How? I asked. 'Why, destroying the brightness by handling it.' I rubbed it with my handkerchief and asked the housekeeper if I had made her any work. 'Oh,' she said, 'you make me no work. Mr. Whittier always takes care of these brasses himself.' That accounted, I said, for his anxiety—and dismissed mine—for I did not think a man generally had any more work to do than was good for him. The little balls of the trimming of my dress kept coming off and were lying around on the floor. I picked one up just as I was coming away and said, 'There, I will give you that as a keepsake.' He laughed, and said he had two in his pocket already! He told some company in the evening that I had talked so much it had made him hoarse!"

War Through Kinetoscope. Photographic views of actual war scenes are of great value to the kinetoscope people and strenuous efforts are made to secure them. Artists run great risks in their quest. A number of bona fide battle pictures were secured by one daring operator during the Santiago campaign, but just as he was leaving the field he was shot through the shoulder. When the soldiers carried him off he entrusted his precious packet of films to a Cuban boy, with instructions to mail them at Siboney. The boy ran into some heavy firing on the way back and took refuge with four natives in an old sugar shed. At the next moment the Spaniards dropped a shell through the roof and blew the shed, boy, films and natives into a thousand fragments. The pictures were absolutely unique and would have created a sensation.—San Francisco Argonaut.

El corte Light Bath. Scientists are recommending the electric light bath. It is free from the exhausting effects of Turkish baths, and is soothing to sore muscles and joints.

Aged Whales. Whales from 300 to 400 years old are sometimes met with. The age is ascertained by the size and number of the whalebone, which increases yearly. Bread is the staff of life and hardtack is the crowbar.

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