

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

One of the Sultan's greatest troubles is that he can't marry a rich American girl.

Marie Corelli got \$42,500 for her latest book, so she can't be blamed so much, after all, for writing it.

The man who advertised for a wife "right off" must have received applicants who didn't have time to get their hats on straight.

It is pretty hard to get away with the average American youth, a fact, however, that does not make kidnapping him any the less reprehensible.

There may, after all, have been an excuse for those West Point cadets who went into the hazing business. They say they were fed on prunes.

If Mark Twain's theory that lying is the resource of primitive intelligence is true the world is not so far from primal times as it is generally supposed.

Emperor William of Germany has sent to Queen Wilhelmina a bottle of water from the River Jordan with which to baptize her future heirs. William has some failures, but no one can accuse him of being late at a baptism.

The dealers testify that Count Castellane got a rake-off on all the bric-a-brac purchased by his wife's money. This undoubtedly accounts for the exorbitant prices. People who dance with titles must pay the bric-a-brac dealers.

Some idea of the diversity of conditions in the State of Texas may be gained from the fact that there was held within its borders a few years ago, at nearly the same date, a drainage conference and an irrigation convention. One was at Galveston and the other at San Antonio. Some persons were thus studying means of lessening the amount of water over a large area, while others sought to increase it, or rather to make its supply for agricultural purposes more regular.

The establishment of an American bank at Calcutta, backed by abundant capital and able business men, is a suggestive incident in the history of India and America. As an illustration of our rapidly growing trade with the East, it is stated that one American house alone, interested in this enterprise, has more than one hundred agents in India, and has at all times merchandise to the value of almost one million dollars in transit. America's part in the business of all oriental countries seems destined henceforth to be a leading one, and to meet the requirements of these new conditions, American banking houses will inevitably follow the cargo and the flag.

The many thousands of busses which travel London's highways are bearing the line of extinction. The American syndicate headed by Charles T. Yerkes, which has projected an underground and surface system of railways for that city, has, it is claimed, succeeded in financing the scheme. American energy will do the rest. With London captured by the American street railway kings, it can be set down for certain that the transit system of that city will be greatly improved. After London realizes the benefits of the push and progressiveness of American transportation methods, it will wonder how it endured its lumbering omnibuses so long. The Americanizing of London is bound to come.

Prof. T. J. See, the well-known astronomer in charge of the telescope at the naval observatory in Washington, has been making calculations to ascertain how long it will take the sun to be extinguished and "wander vacant in the rayless space," which, of course, must involve the destruction of mankind by the painless process of freezing to death. That is the professor's theory, which he prefers to the one maintained by some other scientists that the earth's population will be destroyed by fire or collision. Having established the manner of destruction, Prof. See next calculates how long mankind will exist on the earth, and finds it to be 3,000,000 years, after which a darkened, frozen earth will continue to go through the useless routine of revolving around the darkened sun, and the whole solar system "will be bathed in perpetual night." The only cheerful phase of the professor's prediction is the generous limit he allows mankind, and himself, for no one can contradict him now. It is always wise in making predictions of disaster to assign a time as far away as possible. It is comforting to those who are contemporaries of the prophet, and it is safe for him. And yet who shall say that in 3,000,001 A. D. there may not be professors calculating the time when human beings will cease to exist; or that "star-eyed science" will not have advanced so rapidly that our remote posterity, who will never have heard of us, big as we think we are, will not have all the artificial light and heat they need, and thus dispense with the sun entirely except as a center to revolve around?

Each generation which has witnessed the end of a century may have felt as we feel, that its own period was the grandest in the history of the world. Succeeding ages, with the ad-

vantage of a longer perspective, have sometimes modified the verdict, as time may alter our own estimate of the century just closed. In the light of the present, however, no period of the Christian era except the first seems worthy even to be compared with the last hundred years in the richness of its fruition and the extent of its influence on human life. The material progress of the century has been amply set forth. There is not room even to summarize it here. All the modern wonders of electricity, the railroad, the steamship, the daily paper as we know it, most of the machinery which lightens labor, the discovery of anaesthesia, with the miracles of surgery—these and a host of other things occur to every reader. But it is in another direction that we must look for the real significance of the age. It lies in things moral and spiritual and intellectual, rather than in things material. It is in the feeling of pity for the suffering of animals, the growing opposition to war, the better care of the sick and the insane, the changed attitude of the State toward criminals, and the more general feeling of fellowship and brotherhood between man and man. The nineteenth century might well be called the age of compassion. Therein lies its true glory. This is the thing to keep in mind as we step forward into the new year: To remember the Howards and Judsons and Peabodys, the Florence Nightingales and Father Damien whose work is the noblest legacy of the age, and to strive to carry into the new century, and to intensify, the spirit with which they blessed the old.

There is saline solace for persons with feeble heart action in the discovery announced by Profs. Loeb and Lingle of the University of Chicago. If these discoveries prove to be all that is claimed for them a "pinch of salt" will be all that is necessary to stir a sluggish heart to action. As a result of a year's experimentation, these professors have discovered that salt in the blood in certain proportions is the cause of the heart beat. They have found that certain electric currents caused by the salt solution furnish the life-prolonging principle which works upon the auricular and ventricular muscles and keep the heart in motion. It is easy to see that such a discovery, if based upon scientific exactitude, must reveal the secret of the prolongation of life. Indeed it is claimed by Profs. Loeb and Lingle that the salt solution, injected into blood, will renew suspended heart action. What causes the heart to pulsate has been the subject of investigation and speculation on the part of scientists for centuries. We know that the life principle is centered in the "rhythmic action" of the heart. It follows that if the causes of this rhythmic action can be discovered, man will get very near to the secret that has puzzled the philosophers of the ages. It satisfies the average mind to say that the blood causes the heart to "beat," but the scientist goes further than this. He desires to know what is in the blood that causes the heart rhythm. In his experiments Prof. Loeb found that rhythmic contraction can be produced at will in the stripped muscle of the frog by the action of a single salt solution. The scientific something that causes the heart to pulsate is believed to be a sort of electrical current which is set up between two elements in salt—sodium and chlorine. One carries a positive charge of electricity, while the other carries a negative charge. With salt at a dollar a barrel delivered f. o. b. no man ought to sit up nights worrying about his heart action. It is well known that chloride of sodium, or common salt, is the greatest of all preservatives given by nature to man. It is absolutely essential to human existence. It would not be at all strange, therefore, if it should be found to bear some vital relation to the pulsations of the human heart.

She Was Not Born.
Netta was a little girl who lived in a foundling asylum, a place where homeless children without relatives are cared for. A visitor who often came to the asylum had taken a great fancy to Netta. It was the birthday of Muriel, the lady's little girl, and permission was asked for Netta to take tea with Muriel. As it was Muriel's birthday, Netta wished to be very nice to her. At the same time Netta felt she had an advantage over Muriel, for it was not everyone who lived in a foundling hospital. "You were born, Muriel," she asked. Muriel nodded and smiled. Up went Netta's head a little higher. "It is so common to be born," she said. "I was founded."

Up Boston Way.
"And what," asked the caller in his most ingratiating tones, "what did Santa Claus put in your stocking, my little girl?"
For a moment she looked at him through her diminutive spectacles; then, in a voice of mingled pity and indignation, she said: "We no longer put credence in obsolete tradition; nor was it delicate of you to mention that article of feminine apparel." Gathering up her copy of Ibsen, she hurriedly left the room.—New Lippincott.

Blacksnake a Household Pet.
One of the men employed at the Zoological Gardens in New York has a blacksnake that has the run of his house. It has the reputation of being the best rat-catcher in the entire borough of the Bronx. It is also a family pet.

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