

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

The original "Little Lord Fauntleroy" is a reporter on a Washington daily. He expects to last at least through one administration.

The inventor of the telephone is dead, and if the man who invented the "busy" signal still lives he would do well to keep under cover if he values his life.

A Quebec man thinks he has found a new route to the north pole. His friends hope, however, that if he can be kept perfectly quiet for a while he may recover.

A man from Oklahoma says that pepper is the great life preserver and far superior to the salt elixir. Now, will the advocate of mustard please come forward.

There are some American citizens with souls so base that they can contemplate the troubles of the Asphalt Trust in Venezuela with perfect calm and unruffled repose.

Young Vanderbilt settled \$4,000,000 on his bride. By working the bargain counter ads, the latter will doubtless be able to keep up in plain money without borrowing frequently of her husband.

A Texas man is indignant because his fiancée deserted him on the eve of their appointed wedding day and married another. Some men require time to realize the narrowness of their escapes.

E. L. Godkin, one of the most eminent journalists of New York, says that the election of a notoriously ignorant, worthless or corrupt man to the judicial bench, the Legislature, or the municipal council, makes more impression on a young mind than can be counterbalanced by the study of any manual of government, or by any course of lectures on social reform delivered in high school or college.

In pursuance of a gentlemanly polish the upper class men at West Point never slug each other. They pick out a light-weight freshman and pit him against their most battle-scarred veteran. It is supposed to be the quintessence of courtly conduct to batter the poor freshman into insensibility, and then fill him up with prunes and tobasco sauce as a consolation prize. The West Point standard of gentlemanly conduct is curious study. But for the brand that he takes for yellow.

Invention of a system of springs and weights to run machinery without coal, electricity or other motive power will be welcomed with alacrity in all parts of the world, but especially in Great Britain, where the price of coal is rapidly reaching the prohibitive point. As the new system is confessedly liable to lose power gradually by wear and tear, or altogether by breakage or the slightest obstruction, it will be unavailable for a large category of purposes now covered by coal, wood or electricity. But it will be a vast utility for many common objects.

It is true now, as it has always been, that there is room to spare at the top, while the bottom is miserably crowded. This condition seems unavoidable, the logical evolution of our complex social conditions, the inevitable corollary of the steadily intensifying struggle for existence. The fact has been the same from the beginning. It happens, simply, that recent developments have emphasized it. The higher social organization has its drawbacks as well as its advantages and among the most conspicuous of these is the penalty it imposes upon mediocrity and the burden with which it crushes helplessness.

The advantages that fall to the lot of a man whose surname occurs early in an alphabetical list are well known. As a candidate for office upon an Australian ballot, for example, a man named Abbott has a far better chance than the most eminent Zweigler. But the benefit that comes from the possession of a short name has not heretofore been generally recognized. Not long ago the promotion of one of the auditors of the Treasury Department at Washington created a vacancy to which, upon a formal recommendation to that effect, the candidate having the shortest name, being also a competent man, was appointed. His chief duty is to affix his signature to accounts, and as he needs to make but six letters in signing, he can do twice as much in a day as a man whose name contains twelve letters.

Thomas A. Edison, being recently asked if he thought the twentieth century would surpass the nineteenth in invention and particularly in the application of electricity, promptly replied that it would, and then with characteristic modesty added that in the first place there were more to work, and in the second they know more to start with, "but all the same, none of us knows anything about anything," which is his way of saying that until it is definitely settled that electricity is we are only on the threshold of achievement. The opinions of Mr. Edison, who is a practical man and has turned his numerous inventions to commercial uses, are in sharp contrast with those of Mr. Tesla, a dreamer and an impractical man, who, having settled all electrical and scientific affairs on this earth, is now settling those of Mars

also. With a few more Edisons the world would soon know considerable about most everything.

Longest and most illustrious in the annals of Great Britain, Queen Victoria's reign is also the greatest in many respects. Since her accession to the throne in 1837 discoveries, inventions, wars and the progress of civilization have changed the whole current and tenor of modern history. Scarcely a year of the longest reign in English or modern history but was marked with some notable acquisition of territory, some remarkable discovery or invention, or some epoch-making moral or intellectual advance and improvement. In the matter of territory alone it is sufficient merely to mention the annexation of Aden (1839), the Sindh (1843), the Punjab (1849), the Oude (1856), the Fiji Islands (1874), Burma (1886) and Ashanti (1896). In addition by treaty or purchase Hongkong was acquired in 1842, Pegu 1852, Sikh territory 1846, Cyprus 1878, part of Samoa 1899 and the annexation of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1900—the latter, however, not yet an accomplished fact. Even this vast acquirement of territory in almost every quarter of the globe does not fully represent the growth of the British empire during Victoria's reign. Assuming the rule of India in 1858 and accepting the title of empress of India, it became necessary for Victoria to guard the road to her eastern empire, and in addition to Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus and the control of the Suez canal England practically extended its rule over Egypt and the Sudan. As a result of this vigorous world policy which under any other sovereign might sooner have developed into the lust of conquest which embittered the closing years of her life, there have been many wars, the year 1880 being the first interval of peace during her long reign. Notwithstanding this remarkable fact, so well beloved was Victoria and so well known her love of peace that her reign, viewed in retrospect, presents a sunny, smiling landscape, unfortunately overshadowed by disaster and war at its close. In literature, also, it has been Victoria's good fortune to give her name to an era that stands second only to the mighty Elizabethan. Great poets, historians and artists found inspiration in the peace-loving queen and dedicated their noblest works to her praise. In science, also, a host of great names are enrolled on the Victorian page, and in statesmanship she saw the rise and passing of Lord John Russell, the earl of Derby, Lord Palmerston, Bright, Disraeli and Gladstone—statesmen who, inspired by Victoria, "held a fretful realm in awe" and made the bonds of freedom wider yet. And through all the brilliant and great events of her reign Victoria stood first in English hearts, a spotless queen, whose court was pure and whose life was serene in its consciousness of devotion to the public weal. Of her it may be said in the words of her greatest laureate, "She wrought her people lasting good."

MRS. RICHARD YATES.
Wife of One Governor and Mother of Another.
Wife of one Governor and mother of another is the unique distinction enjoyed by Mrs. Richard Yates of Illinois. Her son, popularly known as Dick Yates, is the second of that name to fill the gubernatorial chair of Illinois. His father became Governor just forty years before, to the day, and then Mrs. Yates stood beside her husband as she recently stood beside her son. On the former occasion the present Governor was an infant, squirming in his nurse's arms. Mrs. Yates again makes her home in the executive mansion at Springfield, where during the administration of her illustrious husband in the dark days of the Civil War she was the hostess at many important functions. After his two terms as Governor, Mr. Yates went to Washington as a Senator, and there Mrs. Yates shone with equal brilliancy in social circles.

A Popular Woman.
Many anecdotes of the kindness of the Empress of Germany are finding their way into the public prints. She was riding with a couple of attendants through the village of Bornim, near Potsdam, recently, and passed the village schoolhouse. Up at the windows were the youngsters' faces and the schoolmaster opened a window wide. Her majesty rode up and asked the teacher what the subject of instruction was. Hearing that it was historical, and that it treated of the period of Queen Louise the Good, the Kaiserin asked the master to go on with the lesson while she listened. She was, of course, obeyed, and for over a quarter of an hour her majesty remained at the window.
So pleased was she with the juveniles' answers that she told them she would treat them all to cake and chocolate very soon, and rode off amid the cheers of the youngsters. The following day the schoolmaster received a note from her majesty saying that the Bornim school children—400 in number—were to be regaled at her invitation that afternoon upon chocolate with cream and cake at the village inn. That there was joy in the village of Bornim need not be stated, nor need the fact that the Empress possesses there 400 very loyal little subjects.

Many a man praises virtue who never thinks of practicing it.

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