

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

He is a good physician who administers medicine to the heart in the shape of wit and humor.

For each day some folks labor in the Lord's vineyard they expect the Lord to work two days in theirs.

This would be a gloomy old world if it had to depend upon the moods of some people for its supply of sunshine.

A man may be willing to admit that his wife knows more than he does, but just the same he objects to her running his business.

Senator Morgan is entitled to the honor of laying the corner stone of the Nicaragua Canal, provided it is to have a corner stone.

A law is proposed in Bohemia requiring candidates for matrimony to procure a certificate of mental soundness. That would cut out about all of them.

Some people get very tender in cold weather; they will remain up all week until 11 o'clock at night, but Sunday evening can't go to church because they are afraid to be out late.

A Chicago professor thinks he can produce life. All he needs, he says, is an "ion." A little tank, placed with its live end up, in a chair, has often been the iron needful to produce much activity in the lives of our fathers.

Only a quibbler will quarrel with the statement that every man works for a living. Those who do not are the exceptions proving the rule, and they are exceedingly unhappy. And no man works harder than the millionaire, to whom the eight-hour law affords no relief whatever. The extreme penalty of financial law has been imposed upon him—he is sentenced to financial servitude for life.

Whatever the cause or causes, strikes are nearly always unprofitable, even to the side which wins. Unless there is a prompt yielding by one side or the other the resultant losses almost invariably overbalance the gains. An advance of 5 or 10 per cent in wages is but a small return for many weeks or months of idleness, and when such an advance is secured there is always the uncertainty as to how long it can be retained.

Their ablest leader, Booker T. Washington, sees the salvation of his race in becoming tillers of the soil. His counsel is of universal application. Man can do without everything but what the soil produces. In its cultivation there is more rest for the mind and exercise for the body than in any other vocation known to mankind. Migration from farms to factories helped to bring in the industrial area, but overpressure upon city employment now points the way back to the soil.

Congress appropriated a million dollars for the soldiers' home now building at Johnson City, Tenn., thirty-five buildings embosomed in a beautiful park and all set "in the heart of the mountains." The characteristic distinction of this home is that veterans of the Civil War, both Union and Confederate, and soldiers disabled in the Spanish War will be harbored there. It is pleasing to think of the older heroes, once antagonists, dwelling together in comfort and amity. It makes one wish the factions that continually snap and snarl and fight in the Central American States could be transported to the neighborhood, fastened in cages and made to look on the scene until they absorbed the meaning of it. Nothing is clearer than that the republics on the farther side of Mexico will never prosper until their people learn to do as we have done, "get through" and be friends.

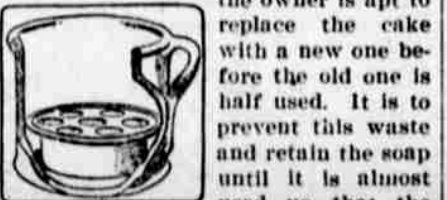
The recent accident on the Chicago and Northwestern Road, in which four persons lost their lives, over thirty were injured and much valuable property destroyed, was occasioned by a misplaced switch. Because the switch was not properly set a passenger and a freight train came together with disastrous consequences to both. It is the opinion of the railroad officials that the responsibility for the misplacement probably lies with some member of the crew of the freight train. There is every reason to believe that this was the case, as the switch had just been used by that crew. So the carelessness of an unknown subordinate has piled up a bill of damages which the railroad company will have to foot. Railroads have to depend on the intelligence and vigilance of employees. There is no automatic machinery by which trains can be run. But men are sometimes careless and sometimes make mistakes which have sad and expensive consequences. Railroads have done much to guard against such mistakes, but they do not seem to have done enough. Since the misplacing of a switch can do so much mischief, apparently it should not be left to one man in a freight crew, unchecked and unwatched, to attend to the setting of a switch. The probabilities are that if it had been made the duty of the engineer to see that the switch was all right, he would have discovered the mistake and there would have been no accident.

The technical engineering details of railroading are of little interest to the general public, as a rule. The public is concerned only in the results of modern railroading as seen in fast and luxurious train service. How this service is

attained is a matter for the engineers and railway officials. The heavy extra cost of fast trains, however, as brought out at the forty-fourth meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in New York, is not without popular interest in that it disabuses the average layman of some erroneous impressions. It might be supposed that a fast train running from Chicago to Denver, and making but one or two stops, would cost less than a slow train making all the stops on the road. This is a radical error, as shown by one of the speakers—Mr. Delano, of Chicago—at the engineers' convention. The elements of cost in the fast train service are increased fuel consumption, higher grade of machinery and service, increased wear and tear, greater risk of accident and the delay to other traffic. It was shown by Mr. Delano that an increase from thirty to sixty miles per hour would raise fuel consumption for power 62½ per cent. The damage to trackage by fast train service is also an important factor in the increased cost. Careful records have demonstrated that the high-speed engine has much more effect upon rails and roadbed than the slower moving engine of greater tractive power, "with a less path described by the counterweight of the driving wheels in single revolutions." It is also obvious to even the layman that the consequences of an accident either to machinery or track at high speed are much more serious both in money loss and in the effect upon the popular mind of such accident than those which occur to slow-moving freight trains. Added to the disasters from collisions are the indirect losses through delays to other traffic. The track must be clear for the fast train. Hundreds of cars of freight are sidetracked at various points to enable it to get by. It is the high-speed trains which are responsible for the expensive block and signal systems. It was also brought out by Mr. Delano that it has been an axiom of the railroad managers that the way to do a maximum business over a piece of railroad is to have all trains moving at as nearly a uniform rate of speed as possible. The high-speed train, moving at long intervals, makes it impossible to attain this maximum business. These disclosures give the public some idea of the extra burden of cost that is imposed upon the carrier corporations by the highly developed fast railway mail service of this country.

Keeps the Soap Rigid.

When a cake of soap begins to slide around in the shaving cup it makes it difficult to obtain a good lather, and the owner is apt to replace the cake with a new one before the old one is half used. It is to prevent this waste and retain the soap until it is almost used up that the invention shown in the illustration has been designed. The binding plate which presses against the surface of the cake of soap is made of porcelain preferably, although aluminum may be utilized, and to insure a perfect fit around the outer edge a rubber packing ring is fitted in a groove on the edge. The tendency of the water to soften the outer edge of the cake is prevented by this plate, as the contact of the brush is limited to the small openings, but sufficient soap for a good lather is easily obtained, and as the cake wears beneath the openings the plate is turned to a fresh position and pressed lower in the cup to hold the cake in place. George M. Muller, of Brooklyn, N. Y., is the inventor.



Satisfied with Themselves. The Haitian loves to play at being a soldier. He delights in uniforms and gold lace, military titles and display, yet he allows his neighbor, San Domingo, to push the frontier between the states farther and farther to the westward without offering the slightest objection. Here is a conversation reported by Hesketh Pritchard between three consequential Haitians, clad respectively in blue, green and pink uniforms thickly netted over with gold lace:

"General," remarks the blue one.

"What, my general?" respond the others.

"I am tired. But the review of today! What a spectacle!"

"O-ho!" cries the pink general. "Assuredly a great spectacle!"

"Without question," says the green general, "the most magnificent spectacle that one could imagine."

"I was much interested," remarks the Englishman.

"Our army is composed of brave men," says the blue.

"Our troops are the finest in the world. Do you not think so, monsieur?"

"I have seen none like them," agrees the Englishman, with caution.

"The army of Haiti has never been conquered. The French were here; we drove them out. The English fought with us; where are they? But we—we are here always. We have never been conquered."

This was the paean of the pink general, and the others agreed.

Women Doctors in Turkey. Among the peasants of Turkey almost all the doctoring is still done by women. In Constantinople there are laws against these healers, but they flourish nevertheless.

Electric Cabs in Paris. Electric cab service in Paris has proved very unprofitable. It is said that the loss so far represents \$900,000.

It is said that people never get any sense until after forty. Some people reach twice that age and never have any sense.

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