

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Gab is nine points in an argument.

Corn has had to soar uncommonly high this year in order to keep its head above water.

Italy's King and the Czar are alike in one respect, anyhow. They are both bomb-dodgers.

What is more natural than that Mr. Howells should go to the woods to block out his new novel?

Mr. Ochs now owns four daily newspapers. A four Ochs team ought to have a pretty strong pull.

A politician was almost eaten by a hog. Think how hungry the hog must have been to do a thing like that.

A misfit memory and a receding conscience are not the worst combination in the making of a machine politician.

If the courts are going to enjoin the speculators from shearing the lambs a lot of the shops may have to shut down.

The fellow who stole a red hot stove was an amateur compared with those two Missouri junk dealers who committed the theft of an iron bridge.

The Kansas farmer is not a professional trust buster, but he happens to be possessed with the ways and means of taking the edge off the corn crows.

Four persons were shot in Louisville, Ky., over a dime. At that rate, massacres would come to \$1.50 and a neat little holocaust could be turned out for \$3.75. These, of course, are Kentucky prices.

Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt's estimate that nine-tenths of the criminals in the United States are men will not be seriously objected to unless she supplements it with the statement that nine-tenths of the men are criminals.

In the old proverb "all work and no play" was bad for Jack. Two forceful men, one in America and one in Africa, have put the case differently. The man in Africa said he decided "to stop working and begin to think." He thought to such purpose that when he died the world was divided between calling him a great statesman or an unscrupulous buccaneer. The American has said in a recent book, "It is a great mistake to think that the man who works all the time wins in the race." It seems to be agreed that work and play and thought constitute the trinity which leads to success.

King Albert of Saxony, who died recently, held much the same relation to the German Empire that the Governor of each State holds to the United States. The German Empire is a federation of four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities, three "free towns" and the Reichsland, or national territory, of Alsace-Lorraine. Each state enjoys a certain independence in local matters, as the American States do; and each is represented in the two chambers of the imperial parliament as the American States are represented in Congress. No election is required to select a successor to the late "Governor" Albert. His brother succeeds as King; the dead ruler was childless.

A county superintendent of schools in Illinois lately organized and conducted an excursion for farmers and their families to the Agricultural College of the State. A party of nearly three hundred persons was gathered, nearly one-half of them boys. The visitors were enabled to see for themselves the fine specimens of stock, and how they are kept, the experiments in fertilization, cultivation, and the hundred and one other things which make the agricultural colleges so valuable to the country; and in the department of domestic economy the farmers' wives had opportunity to see the best methods of the work which most interests them. The plan is feasible in any county of any State, and deserves to be copied.

The late Dean Hoffman, of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had a large fortune and was a proportionately great giver. The aggregate of his benefactions no one knew but himself, and he would not betray the secret. The estimated total, according to a press dispatch, is more than a million dollars. Publicity is a wholesome stimulus to giving. A liberal example bears fruit in more generosity. But there are cases of such a nature that the chief aim would almost be defeated were the names of the recipients known or the objects openly designated. The dean seems to have appreciated the fact that in some circumstances it is best that only three should be cognizant of a benefaction, namely, the bestower, the person helped and the Lord, who loveth a cheerful giver.

Study the life of any successful man and you will see that bravery is one of his strongest points. The most of us are arrant cowards. We are afraid to live and afraid to die. We are afraid of the light and afraid of the dark. We are cautious. We are "conservative." While we linger shivering on the brink and fear to launch away some brave soul steps into his boat, takes up the oars and pulls to his destiny. Many men stick to a salary because they haven't nerve enough to go

into business for themselves. They have all the qualities for success save courage. Caesar hesitated to cross the Rubicon. But not long. Shouting "The die is cast," he plunged in. The element of risk enters into every successful enterprise. The general risks his reputation in giving battle, the author in writing his book, the business man in making his ventures. Thousands who have the necessary courage fail. Hundreds succeed. But of those who succeed none are cowards. Every one of them had the courage to try. There was a time when man was afraid of Nature, but that day is past. Most men nowadays are afraid of themselves. God Almighty made men brave. It is the devil who makes them cowards. Courage is strength. Cowardice is weakness. To make up your mind to fight is half the battle of life. Hold up your chin.

An editorial writer on the staff of one of the leading Eastern weeklies, analyzes in a telling and effective way the undoing of man brought about through the insidiousness of the festive Panama hat, and more terribly than when he first fell in the Garden of Eden. He says: "The Panama hat has accomplished the downfall of man by the simple process of exposing to woman his hollowness. The situation bears particularly hard on the husband, a patient, long-suffering creature. After having spent years in preaching to his wife about her extravagance, especially in the matter of hats, the Panama, with flattering tongue, has approached him and he has fallen, paying enough for one hat to get his wife a half-dozen, more or less. And then, to complete his ruin, the perfidious Panama has since brought on its poor relations, and they are selling anywhere from \$1.25 down to 37 1/2 cents. Even the express wagon horses wear Panamas, and a man returned from a vacation in New England solemnly tells of seeing a farmer's scare crow thus arrayed. Truly the Panama 'tramples upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition.' All of this would not much matter had not the wives of the Panamated men taken notice of the whole thing and, as wives sometimes will, spoken of it. What can a husband say for himself? So far there is no record of a husband having said anything. It seems to be one of the times when there is nothing to say. With \$35 invested in a Panama, with the grocery boy wearing a close imitation which cost 98 cents, and now with a bill for his wife's hat staring him in the face, the plight of the unhappy husband is something to stir pity in every virtuous bosom. Truly in these days the married state is not a condition to be entered upon thoughtlessly."

The recently issued census report on agriculture shows a state of change in the average size of farms that will surprise the average citizen. He has been reading of the breaking up of bonanza farms and the tearing down of fences on the great cattle ranges of the West, and, having in mind the great increase in population, has assumed that the average size of farms has been getting smaller. On the contrary, it is increasing. From 1850 to 1880 the size of farms gradually decreased, with a marked change in the decade between 1860 and 1870. In 1850 the average farm contained a trifle over 200 acres; in 1860 a trifle less; in 1870 a little over 150, and in 1880 considerably less than 150. In 1890 it was a little larger, and in 1900 it reached almost to 150 acres again. But at the same time the number of farms was vastly increasing, having reached a total of 5,739,657 in 1900. There are actually more farms in the United States to-day in proportion to population than there were in 1850, when we were distinctively a rural nation. Notwithstanding the unprecedented growth in urban population between 1850 and 1900, the number of farms grew faster. In 1850 there was one farm for every 16.6 persons. Now there is one for every 13.3. And this increase is an increase in real farms—not mere garden patches. The American countryside is holding its own and more, too, in the rapid general advance of the country. This state of affairs is distinctly good for the nation. While in the cities the tendency is toward the loss of individualism and for the masses to become employees and dependents of great corporations and firms, the tendency in the country is for the heads of families to be more and more independent of others and more and more dependent upon themselves. It is the realization of the independence of the farmer, of the landowner, that is causing farmers to buy more land and is arousing in city people an intense longing for a piece of mother earth that can be called their own. He who has some land has a little sovereignty of his own. There he can establish himself, and, if his wants are simple and his habits good, may live without worry for the morrow while the trusts and monopolies and the growing concentrations of capital enmesh his fellow man in the city. The present great land movement in the West is due in no small degree to an almost universal longing for land, based on the idea of independence that goes with land holding, and a feeling that the opportunity to get cheap lands will soon be gone forever.

Animals and Music.
The effect of music on animals was recently tested by a violinist in a Berlin menagerie. The influence of the violin was greatest on the puma, which became much excited when quicksteps were played, but was soothed by slower measures. Wolves showed an apparent interest, lions and hyenas were terrified, leopards were unconcerned, and monkeys stared in wonder at the performer.

When American meets Greek the chances are he can't read it.

HIS BUG ALREADY CLASSIFIED

As the stogie man stood at the end of the bar he chuckled to himself and blew clouds of smoke until the mixer had serious thoughts of sending in a call for the fire department, says the New York Times. Fortunately the broker's clerk and the meek man came in together, and the oracle let it out. "Got a laugh on that college professor up my way. His regular graft is anatomy, you know; but he makes a side-issue of zoology in general—specially insects and bugs. Regular bug hunter—one of these fellers that chase butterflies and such with a youngish fishnet, and impale the specimens on a big-headed pin, and, as though that wasn't bad enough, insult the poor creatures by writing unpronounceable names under 'em."

"Well, he was returning from church with his family last Sunday when he discovered a new and singular insect on the front door step. He was naturally mighty pleased, and, forming his handkerchief into a net, he pounced down upon and succeeded in capturing it."

"Bring the microscope, children," says he, "and tell your ma to hurry; I want her to look at it. I'm sure it belongs to the hemiptera class, and is a new specimen. Here, Charlie, put your eye to the glass and tell me what you see."

"Oh, par, ain't it splendid! It's got four wings, eight eyes, and don't it sparkle! Red and green and yellow—oh, it's getting away, ain't it?" "Then it isn't dead!" cried the professor, in ecstasy. "He's so near-sighted that he passes his next-door neighbor on the street without knowing him. I wasn't quite sure whether it moved or not. Let me look! Yes, I think after all, it belongs to the genus pentamera—the antenna have that peculiar flexible look; and yet, now that I look again, the eyes seem to indicate that it is a phytocoridae, in which case it will be very destructive to your ma's plants and we must kill it at once. It will be a very valuable addition to our collection. Maria, where's the chloroform?"

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Mrs. Professor. She wouldn't trust him with the paragon without knowing what he was going to do with it, he's so absent-minded. "Kill this insect as soon as you have examined it."

"Well I guess not," says she, looking with much interest at the new specimen. "I paid \$2 for that insect, as you call it, last week, to wear on my new bonnet, and it must have dropped off when I came in. It belongs to the genus millinerae, and couldn't be any denser if it had been baked for a century. Science will have to get along without it, professor; it's already classified."

GAVE A BOON TO MARINERS.
Flavio Gioja is Entitled to Credit for Perfecting the Compass. Historians have long been at odds as to the man entitled to the credit of having invented the mariner's compass, but all are now agreed that to Flavio Gioja is due the honor of perfecting it. If not actually the inventor of the mariner's compass, Flavio Gioja was at least its "perfector." The Chinese compass, such as it was up to the sixteenth century, was very different from the present one, and was moved by water. Marco Polo mentions this.

But whether Flavio Gioja took his idea from this or invented quite a new one, it is his compass that is used, and not the Chinese one. In any case, Amalfi has every reason to be proud of her great citizen. He was originally called Ghi—it seems—then Gira, and, finally, Gioja. As Gioja he was known as a bold pilot and sea captain. The year of his birth is still uncertain. It is put by some at 1302, while others put it between 1300 and 1320. It must be remembered that at this period Amalfi was as great on the seas as Pisa, Genoa, and even Venice. In all references to the subject it is always Amalfi that is quoted as the birthplace of the compass, whatever may be the real name of its inventor. The town of Amalfi has also a compass in its arms, which was added after it had been invented by an Amalfitan. The sculptor Balzico has made a very fine statue of Gioja in celebration of his sixteenth century. He is represented in the mariner's dress of the period, with a dagger and pouch hanging from his belt, and in one hand he holds a compass, which he is studying with great earnestness. A ship's cable is at his feet. The face is noble and very expressive.

Tombstone to a Mare.
In the center of a field at Waverhill, Suffolk, England, is a large flat stone covering the grave of a mare which died in 1852, inscribed as follows: "Polka. She never made a false step. Ecclesiastes III, 19th verse." A reference to chapter and verse shows the following: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other." This is probably the only instance of a text from the Scriptures appearing on a memorial stone to an animal.

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