

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Credit is all well enough until the bill collector begins to come around.

The most magnificent thing Jay Gould ever did was to become the father of Helen.

The Japs are said to be using "human" bullets. This is one of the few humors of "civilized warfare."

Never strike a man until you are satisfied that he deserves it—and don't do it then unless you outclass him.

Ellis Wheeler Wilcox's latest poem says: "Whatever you do, keep sweet." This would be a nice motto for a lemon, wouldn't it?

The men say they have no desire to organize a fathers' congress. They get their innings while the mothers' congress is in session.

It would be like the beef trust to explain that the worry and expense of being investigated will necessitate another increase of prices.

A British scientist claims that the earth is kept hot by radium. Perhaps the great rush for radium was what made last winter so cold.

The Rev. M. J. Savage in a recent sermon undertakes to tell "why more people do not go to church." He finds the principal reason to be that "they don't have to."

We would like to learn the Mormon methods of making a living. A man who can provide for five wives and 100 children under present prices is a financial wonder.

John D. Rockefeller began his business career by learning to milk a cow. A good many people would like to know whether that was when he learned to water things.

Doctors now assert that bedrooms are filled to the doors with murderous microbes and baleful bacilli. That's another excuse for your not going to bed until very late.

When Dr. Rainsford says to us laymen, "We ministers are no better morally than you," we laymen, instead of feeling elated, are liable, knowing each other's infirmities, to be decidedly depressed.

Somebody says that the Parisians furnish the gowns and the American women furnish the figures. When it takes three figures for a gown the American father at once becomes an active factor in the little epigram.

Wash a baby clean and dress him up real pretty and he will resist all advances with the most superlative crossness, but let him eat molasses, gingerbread and fool around the coal hod for half an hour, and he will nestle his dear little curly head close up to your clean shirt bosom and be just the cunningest little rascal in all the world.

The Victory, which bore Nelson's flag at Trafalgar, has been thoroughly repaired, and towed to her former moorings at Portsmouth, where she will be the flag ship of the naval commander-in-chief. The prediction is made that she will float for another half-century at least. It is 143 years since the Victory was launched at Chatham.

To exclude immigrants for illiteracy is unjust. Most of those people are illiterate because they lacked opportunity. Here they soon learn, and their children become as bright as any in our public schools. An illiterate man who is industrious and honest, makes a far better voter and citizen than some native born citizen who has education and a keen desire for grafts.

A dog in England has lately been honored by the receipt of an illuminated address, in which he is informed that he is the most successful collector for the Victoria Infirmary at Norwich, and is thanked by the board of managers. The dog is a 5-year-old fox-terrier, named Prince. He does not wear a cup or basket or carry one in his mouth, as do most mendicant dogs. When he receives a coin he goes unbidden and deposits it in a box kept for the purpose. During 1903 he collected more than 2,000 coins. One hopes that if illness or accident ever overtake Prince there may be a warm bed for him at the infirmary, with plenty of good sirloin steak and dog-biscuit.

Cuba has entered the third year of her independence and self-government and she has every reason to be proud of the record she has made. Apart from a rumor or two her rural riots that were greatly exaggerated and an exceptionally large amount of noise from the defeated party at the last elections, she has nothing to her discredit—and if such things are really discredits, what has our own country to say for itself? The best of it is that the Cubans appear to be in every way contented and happy. Undoubtedly this could not be said had the United States seen fit to retain a closer hold over their government. With or without reason, suspicion and dislike would have taken root. Moreover, the last two years have taught the Cubans a vast deal more about the benefits of quiet and peaceful government than they could ever have learned in any other way. If they have been on extra good behavior for the sake of showing us what they could do, that does not detract at all from the value of the training they have gained. It is too early as yet to show by facts and figures what material benefit Cuba has gained from the reciprocity act which went into effect last December. The fact that the law was pending caused the Cuban sugar ready for exportation last fall to be held back in order to secure the benefit of the lower duties. As a result Cuba sent us during the first three months of this year goods to the value of \$28,000,000, as against

\$12,000,000 in the corresponding months of 1903. At the same time our exports to Cuba increased from \$5,200,000 to \$6,500,000, the more important increases being in flour, cotton cloth, sewing machines, locomotives, lumber, leather and furniture. Beyond question our merchants can secure enlarged markets in Cuba if they but exert themselves to take advantage of the preference in their favor, while it is to be anticipated that Cuba's industrial and agricultural development will furnish proof that it has been greatly stimulated, even before the present year is out.

If any one thinks that the United States has a monopoly of all the energy and enterprise he should revise his opinions forthwith. The whole world is wide-awake, and every people is alert for opportunities for advancement. There are the Russians, for instance, whom we have been accustomed to regard as somewhat slow and behind the times. They have recently secured the services of Horace G. Burt, formerly president of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, to assist them in making the Siberian railroad as efficient as the transcontinental roads in the United States, where the problems of carrying trains across wide plains and over snow-capped mountains have been solved. Then there are the Spaniards, who are planning for closer trade relations with the Spanish-speaking peoples of South America. And the Germans are seeking outlets for their surplus population in countries which will buy the products of the German factories. The British are considering plans for a commercial federation of their colonies for the development of their resources and the preservation of the trade of the mother country. The French are developing their possessions in Northern Africa and undertaking the reclamation of the Sahara, as well as pushing their railroads across the Pyrenees into Northern Spain. And all these people are studying the Americans, that they may avoid our mistakes and profit by our successes. Within a few weeks the reports of two independent British commissions to this country have been made public. An official of the railway department of India, after a tour of the United States, reports that "the one idea in the minds of the American railway men is to get there." He thinks that this is the secret of American railway success. One of the members of a private commission to study the relation of the schools to American commercial success says that "the schools have not made the people what they are, but the people, being what they are, have made the schools." The "American peril," of which we hear much, is that the Americans shall grow complacent and satisfied with themselves, instead of keeping their place in the company of the other wide-awake peoples.

THE HEART'S FARE.

She was a little, bright-eyed Scotchwoman, old, crippled and poor. So long as she could work she had stood at her wash-tub, her daughter's face set against the foe that she knew were closing about her. She had to give up at last—disease was too much for her; so followed the unspeakable bitterness of help from the parish.

But when she surrendered her body her soul did not yield. A tiny two-roomed thatched cottage and \$35 a year were her all, but the poor pittance nourished and sheltered the same sunny spirit. No, that was not all. Years before a lad from the village had gone across the sea. He was no relative of hers, but he came of a family whose heritage were all the needy and sorrowful within their ken, and over in the new country he did not forget. Every Christmas \$5 went from America to the tiny thatched cottage in Scotland—enough to pay for her winter's coal and give her a bit of meat daily for three months.

One day the young Scotchman returned, bringing his bride with him. The tiny old woman, slowly bobbling to meet her callers, beamed upon them with a radiant face. She welcomed the young man with exclamations of delighted admiration. She would not consider herself worth a question.

"Hoo am I? Oh, bravely, thank ye. The legs? Ah, weel, they're no that bad the day."

Then her bright old eyes turned to the bride.

"Ye'll be a maist fortunate wifie to wed w' a Chalmers frae Colinton," she declared. "They are a' alike—a guid to them that needs it, and it's mair the love than the money that does the hert guid, ye ken. Ye're a fortunate wifie to wed w' a' one o' them."

"Mair the love than the money that does the hert guid." It had been the fare upon which she kept her brave spirit alive through the difficult years. The little bride smiled across at the "Chalmers frae Colinton," but she hid the beautiful lesson in her heart.

No Witch Burned in Salem. It is a fact that no witch was ever burned or put to death by fire in Salem or any other part of Massachusetts, says the Washington Post. How the impression that Cotton Mather and his associates had perpetrated that horror gained currency is inexplicable, but it has been floating around for generations and in all probability will "go on forever."

Salem was the scene of the trial, conviction and execution by hanging of persons accused of witchcraft. Gallows hill, the eminence on which the hangings occurred, is perhaps the most interesting show place in New England. It may be doubted if more sincere or conscientious men ever lived than Cotton Mather and his brethren. They went to the Bible for their authority—the Mosaic law—omitting the Christian dispensation. That law told them: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Firmly believing in witchcraft and having no doubt that they had witches to deal with, what were they to do but to kill them? From their point of view they exercised great humanity in employing the gallows rather than the fagot.

If a man can't be bought you can usually land him with battery.

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