

TOPICS OF THE TIMES. A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Correct opinions cannot straighten crooked practice.

A surgical operation has made a bad boy good, and the operation didn't kill him, either.

A St. Louis newspaper reporter left an estate of \$79,844, but then he was a newboy for some years before he became a reporter.

Physicians insist that copper is a germ destroyer, although Tom Lawson declares that the speculative germ fatens on a copper diet.

Anybody can judge how much better it is for his health to be out in the free air at the races than to be shut up in a stuffy church.

Editor Stead is praising the czar as one of the great men of the world. If he isn't careful he will lose the Kaiser from his subscription list.

Manchuria has raised large crops this year, but had a great deal of trouble in harvesting them, owing to circumstances over which it had no control.

The completed returns show that only ninety-one deaths were caused by fourth of July lockjaw this year, against 408 last year. Let the crusade be kept up. There is abundant encouragement.

A doctor in the coal mining districts of Upper Silesia thinks he has discovered in coal dust a cure for consumption, owing to its drying and disinfecting effects on the lung tubercles. He was led to investigation by the fact that consumptive persons coming from other regions to the neighborhood of mines recover their health.

Corruption in government, especially municipal maladministration, is due not so much to the pernicious activity of the professional politicians who make their living by "graft," as to the selfish indifference of the great body of the people, who, except under extraordinary stimulus, prefer to submit to robbery and imposition rather than exert themselves to overturn existing conditions, evil though they know them to be.

It will be an evil day for all the land-grabbing nations, but more especially for the British, when "Asia for the Asiatics" becomes the watchword of the races of the great continent who are as sands upon the sea-shore. Something of the sort is beginning to dawn upon the British mind, and in consequence there is less of rejoicing over the progress of Japanese arms in King Edward's realm than there was at the outbreak of the war.

A study of the histories of the two contending nations in the oriental war proves that the greatness of a nation depends even more upon the virtues of its people than upon the resources of the country. There is no doubt that if Japan had had her seat of government at St. Petersburg or Moscow she would have taken a better advantage of this situation than has Russia, while if Russia had been confined to a few islands isolated from all contact with more civilized races she would never have risen from barbarism.

Cheer was lately brought in a simple and novel way to a patient long ill. A rearrangement of the furniture, a change of the pictures and other ornaments, had done much to make less dreary the wearing days and wakeful nights. At last the patient said: "Get me an American flag." The flag displayed on the wall refreshed the tired eyes, which rested with interest on what was both a decoration and a diverter of the thoughts into new channels. Persons who have seen the Stars and Stripes in a strange land will understand the feelings of the sick man.

It is dangerous for the household to accept as a matter of course the reluctance of the children to return to school after a holiday. Shakespeare speaks of the schoolboy "creeping like snail unwillingly to school," but he puts the words into the mouth of a professed cynic and scoffer. When the house, the school, the holiday, the task are of the best sort, the one ought to be as welcome as the other to the healthy child. If the school-room has no attractions for him, it is fair to suspect either that the teacher is not the right woman for her sacred place, or that the mother makes of the home a mere inn for the disposition of the child's powers, not a fountain at which he may continually refresh them. Happy the mother whose flock of boys and girls look forward to the first day of school with joy, while they look back upon a vacation full of beautiful pleasure and recreation free from the blight of selfishness or of idleness.

The principle of mutual helpfulness runs through all society. It is essential and basic. Man cannot live for himself alone nor be indifferent to the others about him. In the business world this mutuality of interest is seen on every hand. The grocer and the shoe dealer and the dealer in cloth and in furniture, all have interests which may be helped if each one does his share without striving to undo the other. There is the pride in nation which leads the patriot to prefer the things of his own country to those of other lands; there is the very sensible sentiment that one should help his own State or his own city where he can by giving trade and custom to those who are near by. The spirit of jealousy which would move the consumer to boycott his neighbor because, foremost, that neighbor is prospering much, is destructive of society. So, also, in industrial life, there must be mutual helpfulness in all things. The employer and the employe must work together in harmony or there

can be no advancement for either. That which injures one injures both. Every step in advance which makes for better goods or cheaper production or removes some of the artificial barriers to trade and the exchange of labor through commodities, is for the good of all industrial life.

There are many people who thoughtlessly leave loaded firearms about where there are children who know little about their use. Boys are notoriously curious, and anything in the shape of a gun or a pistol has an irresistible attraction for them. They cannot resist the desire to handle deadly weapons, and when they fall into their hands through the carelessness of their elders, a tragedy not seldom results, and parents have often to mourn the deaths of the little ones they love on account of accidents that might have been prevented by a little precaution. The leaving of a charged rifle behind the door or a revolver in an open bureau drawer is inexcusable, and has led up to more than one death, not only among the youthful, but even among adults, as the records of casualties in the daily press abundantly prove. We sometimes doubt the efficiency of having a loaded weapon in the house, even for protection from burglars, and we have noticed but few captures of house-breakers at the point of a pistol. In this age of telephones, one can easily summon assistance without a resort to the revolver, which so few know how to employ intelligently. But if one is deemed necessary, it should be placed beyond the reach of inquisitive and venturesome boys, who may slay a comrade through their ignorance. "I didn't mean to," is not a soothing balm to one who has lost an offspring through the lack of foresight of men of mature years who have not removed temptation from the pathway of the young and inexperienced.

The medical examiner for the New York board of education testified recently that seven per cent of the young women in the training schools for teachers became incurably diseased from overwork. At eighteen these girls were sitting up with their studies till 12 o'clock at night, were undergoing a strain as severe as comes upon the business man at forty. The superintendent had no doubt that it was just this school work that broke them down, or that it explained the prevalence of Bright's disease, heart disease and spinal curvature among them. Her statements of fact will be accepted without the slightest hesitation, and no one, we imagine, would wholly reject her theory concerning the cause of so much sickness among the students. But at the same time a question may be raised whether, generally speaking, too much application to books is required of the rising generation. Certainly the caution against crowding is heard on every hand, and there are related questions to be considered because they have a very important bearing on the subject as a whole. Were the girls who broke down in good health when they began? Were they equal to the average in brightness or were they trying to make up by their wills for what they lacked in intellectual gifts? If they had spare time, did they utilize it properly in exercise and outdoor diversions, or did they remain in the close atmosphere of their rooms? Did they use to excess such stimulants as tea and coffee? Was their food insufficient, or was it perhaps rich and unwholesome? Did they have cause for worries and nervous excitement that was not connected with their studies? We do not ask these questions to suggest a defense for mental cramming, but simply to indicate how large the subject is. Possibly many young people are credited with overwork when the amount of work that they actually do would not trouble them if their lives were differently ordered. For the common saying that work never hurt anybody applies to all kinds of work, and is certainly true within the limits commonly applied. But, of course, sitting up till 12 o'clock at night is not good, nor are long hours which keep one fatigued. There should be rest and recreation with complete and invigorating change. But these will leave time for much hard work that may be pursued without injury, and, after all, the problem is ultimately an individual one, which is solved by reference to the native endowment of strength and intellectual ability.

Sack-Cloth Still Worn. Do you walk about in sackcloth and ashes? The question is absurd, is it not? You fondly imagine that the days when men did such things are past. In many parts of Chicago one can get "Irish frieze" overcoats for \$8. Now, this is how the "frieze" cloth—in this instance, at all events—is made. Odd pieces of gray, brown, and blue cloth are collected from tailors' shops. These are kept in distinct groups, as far as the colors are concerned, and are chopped by machinery into the tiniest pieces. Ordinary common sacking is next obtained and given a coating of thin glue on one side only. Next this surface is covered with a layer of the chopped cloth, and, after a powder of the desired color has been plentifully sprinkled over it, the whole is passed between steam-heated rollers. When dry, a good thick "cloth" is ready for conversion into cheap overcoats. It will stand fairly rough wear, is warm, and can scarcely be distinguished from the genuine article. But it is disastrous to stand too near a big fire while wearing one. It will be seen from this explanation that it is possible to actually walk about in sackcloth and ashes in 1904.

Found What He Wanted. "If Crabbe ever comes around your place borrowing anything," said Bubba, "don't let him have it." "You've spoken too late," replied Newcomer; "he was around this morning." "You're easy. What was he borrowing?" "Trouble. He's in the hospital now."—Philadelphia Ledger.

When a woman travels, she doesn't get much enjoyment out of it, through watching her things, to see that no one steals them.

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