

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

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

It looks as if the Czar were due to get his crown nicely Japanned.

If sour milk will keep a man sweet it only proves once more that this is a contrary old world.

"The Amazing Marriage," by George Meredith, is understood now to mean marriage on the 10-year plan.

There is almost as much formality in the coronation of a Servian monarch as in the assassination of one.

Silence sometimes serves as a substitute for wisdom, just as stupid self-satisfaction does duty for dignity.

Now the head of the house bewails the fact that the 30-yard skirt and the \$7-a-barrel flour came into fashion the same season.

"Undoubtedly the Lord hates a liar," says the Boston Herald. Isn't this open to argument? He may hate the sin, but love the sinner.

King Peter succeeded in getting himself crowned without the firing of a shot. If he is wise, however, he will keep right on compelling the cook to taste his victuals first.

Men who attach themselves to a political party with the intention of having everything their own way make mistakes. They should begin with a vestry or a church choir.

This new language, Esperanto, judging from samples that have appeared in print, is full of hyphenated words. That settles its fate in this country. It will never get the hyphens past the proofreaders.

There ought to be no room in this country for the "Black Hand" and the "Before Day" organizations. The purposes of both are too dark, as indicated by their names, to be permitted to survive among an enlightened people.

A New Haven man has been sentenced to serve five years in the penitentiary for embezzling \$75,000. The wonderful thing about his case is that the pessimists are not calling attention to the fact that he was a Sunday school superintendent.

A Liverpool cable dispatch in a trade journal reads, "The world is hungry for cotton and cotton goods." Besides telling an important truth, this sentence suggests how often "hungry" is figuratively used to imply sharply felt wants of all kinds. One never says that the world is "thirsty" for cotton goods, for work, or for vacations.

The average reader will give but a glancing notice to the statement of a New York costume creator that "society girls" cannot dress on less than \$10,000 a year. The same reader will look upon any girl, man or woman who spends \$10,000 a year for dress as having more money than sense. It is the good, hard-working girl to whom the majority of Americans look with pride—one who can get along with \$100, \$50 or even \$25 a year for clothing—not the pampered ones who spend from \$1,000 to \$10,000 a year for dress and have set their traps to snare a foreign duke or count.

The test of the habitual criminal is the lack of response to reformatory influences. The beginner in crime, whatever his temperament or his apparent hardness of heart, is entitled to at least one opportunity to show whether he is thus amenable to reformatory influences or not. If not and he persists in criminal action, the interest of society would seem to demand the indeterminate sentence and he must be made to understand that, having forfeited his chance to shape his own career, he belongs to the State, and that whether his imprisonment lasts for a shorter or longer period depends upon himself.

Skilled labor is generally able to change its base when the desire awakens, but few craftsmen can see so much of the country as expert fruit-pickers do. They begin their year in Georgia, for instance, where the peach season comes in June. From the south of the State they go to the north; then to Arkansas and Missouri; later to Michigan and to the mountain districts of western Maryland; finally to California and Florida, and thence round to Georgia again. Metaphorically, "cherries are ripe" at every season somewhere in this fortunate land, and he should be a happy man who, even in the way of business, can keep perpetually in touch with the beauty and luxuriance of harvest.

A few years ago the scientific sensation was liquid air, as recently it has been radium. Liquid air was to turn all our wheels, heat our houses in winter, and cool them in summer—liquid air was to destroy our garbage, anesthetize all our pain and usher in a new era. It was soberly argued by men who made claim to scientific knowledge that liquid air could be used to run compressors to make more liquid air and thus, with a thimbleful at the start, a force could be created strong enough to pry the earth from its orbit. A and commentary on these high hopes is an item to the effect that judgment of \$272 against the company owning the patent has been returned unassisted. Liquid air is as wonderful as it ever was, but wonderfulness is not usefulness. Science also has its toys.

George Bernard Shaw's new Don Juan play has already started a lot of talk about Byron's "Don Juan." Byron did his best to prevent this. He rhymed Juan with "new one" and with "true one." But he has shared the fate of the other English poets, who for years and years, and almost for centuries, rhymed Cadiz with "ladies." They had annexed Cadiz and had Anglicized it. Their descendants have hauled down the

flag. Cadiz again belongs to the foreigner. It is called "Cahdoeth." We say "Don Kehote." And we shall probably go on saying that a project is "kehote." Which leads to this general rule for culture: "Take all foreign words that have been Anglicized and translate them back into their original languages." Versailles, for instance, became so completely Anglicized that in the mouth of the most fastidious English scholar it rhymed with palls. To acquire culture, make it rhyme with pie. Then, some day, the exquisitely cultured man will come who will remember that York is simply an Anglicized corruption of the name which the Romans gave the town, and who will, therefore, talk of taking the train for New Eboracum.

Prof. Mason, of the Smithsonian Institution, has been studying the blonde peoples and now feels warranted in announcing that in six hundred years the blondes will have disappeared from the face of the earth. We are not going to quarrel with Prof. Mason. As an attaché of the Smithsonian Institution he ought to know all about blondes—in the abstract, of course—but perhaps he has permitted the evidence of his eyes to weigh against the testimony of centuries. He has probably observed in his journeying to and from the Smithsonian Institution that the locks of many of the women he meets are becoming darker. Being a man of science and not an idler in boudoirs Prof. Mason has ascribed this change to the processes of natural evolution instead of to its rightful cause, the fashion. With due submission to the professor we will hold to the belief that the blonde will continue as an institution. The passing of the peroxide person is admitted. It is proper that she should be on her way. She remained over long. Her successor, the bronzed blonde, is but an ephemeral creature and will disappear in much less than six hundred years. But the low-headed races who have been making history since the morning of time, they give no evidence of vanishing. The brunette long head has been kept busy for twenty centuries trying to hold his own with the blonde flat head and the might of the Teutons dominates a great part of the civilized world to-day. We will not worry about the fitting of the blonde in spite of the dismal prophecy of Prof. Mason. He is an image breaker who sees with unseeing eyes and who dispassionately makes an announcement that would destroy the anthology of romance and passion and spoil the scenery. His study of the races might be of more avail if it were carried on in the mounds of the Middle West rather than on the blonde crowded streets of the nation's capital.

Henry James, in his recent biography of William Wetmore Story, gives a delightful glimpse of the amusements of the group of American and English children in Rome of whom just fifty years ago little Edith Story, the sculptor's daughter, made one. She was, too, the most favored one, for she was just recovering from a dangerous illness, and was therefore the special pet of her father's famous friends.

Hans Andersen was one of them, and, says Mr. James, "The small people with whom he played enjoyed, under his spell, the luxury of believing that he kept and treasured—in every case, and as a rule—the old tin soldiers and broken toys received by him, in acknowledgment of favors, from impulsive infant hands."

"Beautiful the queer image of the great benefactor moving about Europe with his accumulations of these precious relics! Wonderful, too, a certain occasion, that of a children's party, when, after he had read through 'The Ugly Duckling,' Brownie struck up with the 'Pied Piper,' which led to the formation of a grand march through the spacious Barberini apartment, with Story doing his best on a flute in default of bagpipes."

"But the tenderest recollection is of Thackeray reading 'The Rose and the Ring,' as yet unpublished, to the little convalescent girl who was always so happily to remember that in the old Roman days, between daylight and dark, the great author had sat on the edge of her bed and read the immortal work to her, chapter by chapter."

Happy little convalescent, indeed! And think how proud when, later, in the first volume of the first edition published, she found a drawing of an obsequious little fopky presenting a little rose and a little ring on a salver, with his "most respectful compliments to Miss Edith Story."

No slander on the diet of the stalwart German race is intended by this story, which the Argonaut prints, but the sentiment of the tale might have come from the lips of Mr. Dooley's friend, Schwartzmeister, or some of his brethren of iron digestion.

A German was discussing the high price of cabbage.

"I tell you, dese cabbages is way up high dis year. Me und my vife puts up six or seven or eight parrels of sauerkraut every year, yes. But we can't do ut dis year, no. Der cabbages, dey cost too much."

"But you put up some sauerkraut, don't you, Chris?" asked a friend.

"Oh, so! Yes, we put up some. Two or t-t-ree parrels, shust to haf in der house in case of sickness, yes."

Black is warmer.

A French authority had two thermometers—one of ordinary glass, the other painted black—placed in the sun. In the white glass the mercury rose to 144. Under the black paint it went up to 157 in the same position. The inference is that people who wear black coats are warmer in the sunshine than those who dress in white.

Truthful.

"Didn't you say you had all the comforts of home?" asked the indignant guest.

"Well," answered Farmer Cornmeal, "after you folks are gone we do have 'em. That's what we take boarders for."

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